

# The CLEARING HOUSE

A JOURNAL FOR MODERN JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

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# The Clearing House

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# Junior-High-School Priorities

By HELEN F. STOREN

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES depend upon the times, community and parent pressures, and faculty commitments. Always there is a lag between demands and school practice. Curriculum and methods barely catch up with demands when world events, new local concerns, and new professional knowledge force another evaluation of the school program. But while all this is going on, someone must "keep school," and, consequently, any fundamental change is necessarily gradual and piecemeal. Children cannot be turned out to pasture while school and community sit down and plan a new program. Even if they could, I doubt if any agreement on educational goals could be reached at a time when current social values are being questioned. There are confusion and controversy today about the purpose of life itself, about the proper image of man, and about the concept of an ideal community. There are, however, straws in the wind which indicate a slight trend toward spiritual values and away from gross materialism, a tiny movement away from the cult of conformity, and a growing appreciation of intellectual pursuits. If these trends are more than a fearful response to the atom and panic over Sputnik, they will eventually leave their impact on the school.

Meantime, while we wait for new directions and a complete overhauling, some immediate changes, if only of a piecemeal kind, might be made. We shall probably continue for a while to hold to our rather too broad educational aims, but perhaps we

can establish new priorities. Reports such as those of Dr. Conant<sup>1</sup> and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development<sup>2</sup> have suggested priorities for the high school, but up until now little specific attention has been given to the junior high or to grades seven and eight in an elementary school.

For the past twenty years or so, the focus in schools for early adolescents has been on the personal and social development of children. This was an understandable and essential educational trend. New psychological knowledge, the mental hygiene movement, and the desire for social betterment all influenced the school program. If, in certain situations, the emphasis on human relations has caused the school to neglect scholarship, in other situations it has made academic achievement possible for children who, in the past, would have dropped out of school because no one had attempted to try to help meet their emotional and social needs. The mental hygiene and social relationship trend was reflected in the research projects carried on by educators in the teachers colleges, with the consequent lessening of research relating to methods of teaching the academic subjects. There is no

<sup>1</sup> James B. Conant, *The American High School Today* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1959). (Dr. Conant is now preparing a report on junior highs.)

<sup>2</sup> "The High School We Need," a report from the A.S.C.D. Commission on the Education of Adolescents (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1959).

reason now for educators to become defensive because we have been concentrating on social development these past years. Nor need this necessary aspect of education be neglected if we now attack, with as much vigor and enthusiasm, another aspect of education. An understanding of the problems of the timid boy and the aggressive girl as well as a knowledge of the dynamics of group behavior is now part and parcel of a teacher's equipment. These concerns should be taken for granted while we devote some of our energies to the other goals.

For the next few years we might well concentrate in the junior high on two priori-

ties: first, on trying to develop in each young person an enthusiasm for learning, a curiosity for further knowledge about the world around him; and, second, on helping each boy and girl develop an awareness of and a sensitivity to beauty.

The junior-high-school period is an appropriate time to work on these objectives. High-school and college work will yield little but grades and credits if students have not learned the joy of achievement reflected in the pleasure of "knowing." If students could be heard talking with eagerness about a new idea discovered or a new skill acquired rather than about the score on a test or the grade on the report card, we could be assured that they have a respect for learning and are on the road to scholarship.

Aristotle said, "Wonder is the beginning of knowledge." In the junior high we must provide opportunities for *wonder*.

How do we begin? Although superior teachers have always inspired superior children to "want to know," the climate in America until recently has not always been conducive to "learning" except as a means to a marketable skill or profession. A child who wanted to learn for the joy of it was often considered odd or stuffy. Now the climate has shifted somewhat and, at least in the realm of science and mathematics, it has become good to be knowledgeable. Let us hope this will soon be true for the other fields of knowledge.

The development of this love of learning in the junior high presupposes the ability to read. A child will have very little desire to study on his own, to investigate, to experiment, to produce, to perfect, if he is handicapped in the basic skills. Only if he has the tools can he achieve the satisfaction in learning that marks a scholar. It is imperative, then, that if a child enters the seventh grade without these skills, he must be taught them. After diagnosis he must be provided with the opportunity to achieve to the level of his ability. This will neces-

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#### EDITOR'S NOTE

*The word is being passed around by a few school administrators and experts in school organization that maybe the junior high school has not fulfilled its promise and that new pattern of organization ought to be developed to take the place of the 3-3 type. Although it is necessary to be open minded about new designs in education, it strikes us that it would be well to examine the motives of those who would abolish the junior high school. They must have a partisan angle, for the 3-3 secondary-school organization now enrolls 75 per cent of all those attending secondary schools in America. The junior high school and its counterpart, the senior high school, seem to be here to stay. Of course, all of secondary education is undergoing reappraisal as our society demands excellence of its schools. But let's question the partisans who plug for the 8-4 system and in so doing try to make the junior high the culprit.*

*This is by way of introduction to this thoughtful analysis of priorities needed to improve program and services in the junior high school. The author is a well-known writer and associate professor of education at Queens College, Flushing, New York. We believe that here is must reading not only for junior-high-school staffs but for all persons connected with secondary education.*

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sitate a more flexible program. Provision must be made for students to proceed at their own rate. Small classes should be organized in mathematics as well as in reading, and when a child has achieved to the extent that he can proceed with a regular class, he should be put back in that class. The arguments that go on over homogeneous *v.* heterogeneous grouping are usually futile. The success or failure of these arrangements depends upon so many other factors. Rather than making all-out claims for one or the other, it is better to focus on the individual child and to place him in the situation where he learns best. If classes are small enough for teachers to give a good bit of individual instruction, it may be best to keep the groups mixed. If this is not possible, it may be better to plan several kinds of groups for concentrated instruction. It may be wise to plan the whole three years on a developmental basis, eliminating grade levels altogether. Some children will achieve up to four or five "years' worth" of reading or mathematics in three years, whereas others will accomplish only the equivalent of one or two years.

Granted then that basic skills can be provided for in one way or another—what can be done to foster an atmosphere for learning? A few suggestions follow, some of which are being tried out in various junior-high-school systems around the country.

#### *Take the Emphasis off Marks*

Frantic parents, concerned about college entrance, are pressuring children to achieve, and the only tangible evidence they have of achievement is the report card. Students respond to this by continuously asking, "What grade did I get?" rather than "Do I understand this?" If parents and teachers would ask, "Who knows what happened in Tibet?" or "Why did you like this story?" instead of always, "How many got 95 on the test?" the focus on grades might be somewhat abated. Would it be too radical to suggest that we eliminate numerical

grades altogether for a year or two and see what happens? Scores on standardized tests could be recorded by the teacher—but the main appraisal could be turned to descriptive evaluations of the kind and degree of mastery of content and the acquisition of skill. "John can do such and such an experiment in science without any help." "Mary reads a book and describes it to the class in such a way that makes all the students want to read it." "Ralph came to me and said, 'I'm doing fine. I've worked all the problems and want some more.'" "Dorothy knows exactly how to get information about the way a bill is passed in the legislature." "Fiances is so distressed about the famine in Haiti she suggests we send some money." An accumulation of specific descriptions as well as noncompetitive test scores, such as the number right and wrong, might be more meaningful than an 81 per cent.

#### *Get Rid of Encyclopedic Learning*

Most of our courses, especially in social studies, contain too many topics. This makes for superficial and uninteresting learning and leads to cramming. To love history you must know detail—become immersed in the times and the people. Why not extend American history for two years instead of the usual one year in eighth grade? Children need to read widely about each major period instead of a few pages from a textbook each night. Again this means elimination or postponement of some topics until high school. A careful appraisal of the usual junior-high-school social studies course shows that much of it is a repetition of the meager and often dreary facts learned in the elementary school. The junior-high age group likes the dramatic, the unusual, even the bizarre. We should try harder to find out what content takes best at this age level. Some of us are no longer sure that it is the neighborhood or community that appeals to seventh graders. Perhaps the "far away" is a better bet. Fascinating books are legion, but too often teachers stick to a

single text that digests the exciting days of Jackson or Roosevelt to a few pages. Or even worse, running a good idea into the ground, the teacher lets each child report on bits of information taken from an encyclopedia while other children copy the skimpy facts in their notebooks. The teacher must not only supply dramatic stories herself, but must challenge with thought-provoking questions. Students need to be encouraged to question and then to push on with patience and determination to find the answers.

All this may sound like just plain good teaching—and it is—but in how many schools can you find a genuine devotion to learning? Both old and new methods applied in routinized fashion deaden rather than quicken interest. Methods should be varied. The unit approach can become as methodical and grim as the textbook. Committee work can become as tiresome as the traditional recitation. A teacher needs to plan her teaching in terms of the content to be taught, the interest and ability of the class, and her own skills and desires. One day a discussion may be planned, another day research work, another day a reading, another a debate, and so on. Perhaps there has been too much prescription, too many curriculum bulletins. If teachers were encouraged to try new ways, they would use their imaginations. Availability of time for sharing ideas, of help when requested, and of materials when needed, combined with a reduction of clerical and administrative work, would bring out a teacher's latent talents. Junior high schools frequently use teachers to keep books, patrol the cafeteria, sell supplies, and make out endless reports. Perhaps hiring an extra clerk would be good economy in the long run.

#### *A Sensitivity to Beauty*

The second priority which I suggest is a love of beauty, and a sensitivity to it in nature, in literature, in music, in decoration of home and community. These appreciations

must be acquired gradually through absorption, imitation, and experience. Although school buildings are more attractive than they were fifty years ago, there is still a tendency to the utilitarian. To combat the sameness and bigness of our artifacts (the identical furniture and clothing now for sale in all the stores) is not easy. Good art and good music must be all around us. Trips to museums and attendance at concerts as well as at the best of movies and television will need to be planned. If these appreciation subjects are presented in an informal manner—perhaps without any attempt to grade the student, except for designation of pass or fail—interest will gradually develop. For the bright or talented there can be the deeper and more theoretical courses in art and music with the same credit allowed as for any academic subject.

Many of the courses in general music in the junior high schools are neither fish nor fowl. They do not teach the fundamentals of music nor do they provide appreciation or even fun. A good deal of time is devoted to singing songs in a halfhearted manner or in listening apathetically, or sometimes angrily, to Beethoven's Fifth. This is partly due to the fact that schools are primarily interested in training *performing groups*, and that many teachers prefer to teach only instrumental music to a select group or to work with a small chorus. If we seriously believe that music can be a joy to all, we had better direct our efforts toward the objectives of appreciation or skip it altogether as a required subject.

As a rule, art courses in junior high seem to be better than the music courses. If the program is a good one, most children enjoy painting, pottery making, and other art activities. However, again there is a lack of emphasis on *understanding* of art, of art history, of beauty in nature, in architecture, and in clothing. At fourteen a child is emotionally ready for experiencing beauty, but he must learn to look, to absorb, and not to be afraid of feeling satisfaction in con-

templation. A hurried "run through" of slides of the great masterpieces once a week with an identification test of artists required at the end of the period is not conducive to developing a lifelong pleasure in great art. It is not that we do not have the facilities and qualified teachers available, but that art appreciation has not been taken seriously as a goal. The administrative and organizational arrangements designate art as a minor subject which is often treated as if it were in the program simply to fill in an hour on the schedule.

Beauty, of course, is not confined to art and music. Literature should also be geared to aesthetic values. In our attempt to make learning real and functional, we often neg-

lect poetry and prose that will arouse a feeling of joy.

This paper has not tried to delineate *how* we shall do these things, but is written simply to make a plea for a reconsideration of junior-high-school priorities, and to encourage us to lend our best efforts toward establishing some new priorities. Other priorities may be as well justified as the two mentioned here, but it would seem that in our present world of confusion and tension, a love of learning and an appreciation of beauty are stable values that will serve our children well throughout their lives. If we do not start to develop these values in early adolescence, they may never have a chance to grow.

◆

## Passing the Bark

By GORDON GRINDSTAFF

Evanston, Illinois

The trees along Elmwood Street were discussing one of their own species of flora, Johnny Oak Tree.

"It's an amazing story," Sally Spruce said to her sister trees. "We never thought any good would come of that oak. But look at him. He's really branching out to be a fine, sturdy tree. Yet, in every tree school along Johnny's educational road, we blamed the teachers in the previous school for John's failure to branch out more than he did."

"That's right," rustled Anabelle Elm. "It was only last week that Johnny finished the Advanced Arboretum Course, made up of postgraduate classes in branching out. Didn't do well while he was there. We claimed that the cause was Johnny's terrible training in the Orchard Academy. We insisted that the orchard educators hadn't prepared him adequately. Remember?"

"Indeed I do. Nevertheless, when John was in Orchard Academy," added Sally, "we put all the blame for his inadequate branching out on Sapling School. We claimed then that John's sapling-school teacher hadn't done her duty in helping him grow."

"Doesn't that seem amazing!" exclaimed Anabelle. "You know, I can recall when we thought it was a shame for an inferior twig such as Johnny to be passed on to Sapling School without ever having so much as opened a bud."

"How right you are!" said Sally, "and do you remember when Johnny Oak Tree was in Acorn Nursery? We said that Johnny didn't have any potential; and wasn't it too bad, we moaned, that Johnny's *father* hadn't prepared him for the nursery!"

Anabelle smiled.

"And wouldn't you know it," she said, "that we would blame Johnny's slowness as a baby on a human *tree* *surgeon*!"

"Isn't that plant nature, though!" laughed Sally Spruce. "Every one of Johnny's teeteachers did a good job in helping Johnny grow. We never would admit it, though. And now that John has completely branched out, it looks as if there were a few times along Johnny's path when we were barking up the wrong tree!"

# Opening Day in History Class

By JUSTIN B. GALFORD

ANY EXPERIENCED TEACHER knows how opening day can be marked with a variety of interruptions, rearrangements of room assignments, changes in student schedules, and the unpredictables of administration that even the ablest of planners could not always foresee. Despite the obstacles, a good teacher seeks to get his class organized without delay.

The problem of how to get off to a flying start, with a definite plan for a profitable discussion and a specific assignment for the class, was taken up by the social studies department. The teachers agreed that the important considerations would be that something be available to put into the students' hands since books are not usually available on opening day, that the material be self-contained so that it could be worked on by the students at intervals when the teacher might be handling organizational details, and that it be simple enough in vocabulary for the retarded readers and yet be sufficiently interesting for most of the students. Further agreement set the topic: it ought to be about the value of studying history. Any time spent on "selling the subject," it was felt, would pay future dividends.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*This article not only has practical implications for teachers of history and perhaps other subjects, it includes a review test that a reader of CH can take to find out his OQ—Observation Quotient. The author of this novel design for kick-off day is chairman of the social studies department, Central High School, Newark, New Jersey. When we first read the article and tried to answer the test questions, it was necessary to read the statement again. Did you do that too?*

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Previous opening-day activities had included assignments such as finding the meaning of history, giving reasons for studying it, or asking the students to list some interesting facts that they had remembered from their last course in history. Results had often been less than satisfying. Dictionary definitions of history were not always understandable, and students were frequently at a loss to give more than clichés about why they should study the subject.

A solution to the problem was finally worked out by the preparation of a mimeographed "story" about the value of studying history. It met the criteria that the teachers had established and in practice worked well. The questions that followed could be used for written work by the students, either for discussion or for the following day's assignment. Here is the item handed out:

### *A History Teacher in Heaven*

This is a story about a history teacher who went to heaven and was stopped at the pearly gates by St. Peter.

"Why should I let you in?" asked St. Peter. "Many students would wonder whether a teacher of history could have lived a useful life. What do you say?"

The history teacher knew he was on the spot. He thought carefully before he spoke. "Just as my past is important in deciding where I am going from here, so is the past of the world important in explaining where it is going," he said.

St. Peter said nothing. He listened while the history teacher went on to explain what was meant. "History is like this," said the former teacher. "If you came late to a ball game or to a TV program, you wouldn't know what it was all about unless you had found out what had gone on before. In other words, you wouldn't really 'know the score.' Take the United States, for example. There's just no other way to understand why we have a president instead of a king, or why we have so many religious groups and how they can get along so well, or why we speak English instead of something else, unless we know our nation's history. We

certainly can't understand why there is a United Nations, or why we have such a rivalry with Russia, or why Africa is important to us, unless we know something of the world's history."

"History is around us everywhere," the teacher continued. "There is nothing that we could be interested in, whether it be our hobbies, our jobs, or the things we do or say, that hasn't an interesting past. When we speak of a Plymouth, or a De Soto, or a Cadillac, we are using names that come right out of history. The same can be said for Raleigh, Marlboro, or Cavalier. It's true you can use names such as these without knowing what's behind them, but it's more fun if you know."

Watching St. Peter, who gave no sign of his feelings, the teacher went on to plead his case. "History," said he, "is the story of human beings and it can help us to understand more about the ways in which people behave. What makes some men become heroes while others end up as fools? A knowledge of many lives can bring us closer to the answer. Above all, history can be exciting. It's the story of sensational discoveries, of great explorers, of successes and failures, of horrible happenings and great moments. It's all that man has said and done. It's the jigsaw puzzle into which everything fits and from which we can take out the kind of information we need for whatever interests us. No wonder we never tire of reading about the past and we can enjoy discovering the truth about the way things were."

"That's all very interesting," said St. Peter, breaking his long silence.

But here the story comes to a close. The future of the history teacher, like that of the world itself, was a secret that time alone could unlock.

Had the history teacher lived a useful life? Had he stated his case honestly? What would you have done if you were St. Peter? But first, see if you can answer these questions:

1. The teacher gives four reasons why he considers the study of history to be useful. Find these and list them.

2. Which of these do you consider the best reason? Why?

3. The teacher gives examples of some facts about the United States for which history gives the explanation. Can you give the history behind these facts?

4. Can you identify the people or events in history whose names were given to the items mentioned by the teacher?

5. Can you think of any other names from history in everyday use?

6. What are some recent movies or TV programs that prove that "history can be exciting"?

7. The teacher gives some definitions of "history." What does he say it is? Why do you agree or disagree with this definition?

8. Can you give examples of how a knowledge of history can help you to know more about your hobby or about other things that may be interesting or important to you?

9. What would you have done if you were St. Peter?

A number of variations in the use of the foregoing story developed through classroom applications. One teacher used it to demonstrate techniques of studying and methods of outlining. Another class created a bulletin board display on commonplace items that have historical names and associations. Above all, it served to set the stage for historical study, and its practical value was demonstrated by the many references to its ideas in subsequent classroom discussions.



## If I Had My Way

*If I had my way, there would be at least three classifications of teachers: Teacher. This would require five years of preparation, including one full year of internship and instruction in theory and methods. The completion of this program would entitle the student to full certification as a teacher. Career Teacher. Requirements for this level would include the program completed for full certification, plus an additional year of study in the subject-*

*matter area and in research. Professional Teacher. The status of the professional teacher would require seven years of preparation, with at least two years of teaching experience at the career-teacher level. The seventh year of preparation would be devoted to a concentrated program for a highly specialized area in education, such as school psychologist or curriculum consultant.—WILLIAM J. WOODHAM, JR., in the Virginia Journal of Education.*

# Testing—a 4-Stage Rocket

By GEORGE LUCHT

MEASUREMENT IS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT for progress in any field, and yet the importance of this element is not fully realized in teaching. Perhaps this recognition has failed to materialize to any degree because high-school teachers are trying to determine the limits of their responsibility. There is one charge given almost universally to the high school, and that is the development of the intellect. Yet how many teachers really *know* the level of achievement of their pupils in a particular class after a period of time? Scientists have been able to advance to the stage of putting satellites into space because they have knowledge gained in part from accurate measurement. There is no doubt that there will be almost countless measurements taken, checked, and rechecked before a man is sent into space. Why shouldn't this same care and concern

be exercised in the teaching field with equal vigor? High-school teachers direct their pupils into the "space" of life's work, college, obligations of a citizen, and so on, many times on the basis of little or no data based upon measurement.

It is true that gains have been made in standardized achievement testing in the schools, yet the most vital procedure for the measurement of a pupil's achievement has been for the most part neglected. This phase has to do with the informal classroom measurements designed by the teacher. In many instances "data" in this area are gathered intuitively.

Many teachers attempt to make up for the poor techniques used by giving out fewer *A*'s and more *F*'s. This reveals a definite lack of knowledge about the problem, and is no solution at all. Marks are only expressions of the results of measurement, just as a high temperature is a result of a disease. We don't treat a temperature, but rather try to fight the cause of the temperature. Measurement of achievement is a complex puzzle and there probably is no one simple solution. Changing a pattern of marks will do nothing to improve the teacher's measurement or his knowledge of the pupil.

The techniques involved in the measurement of a pupil's achievement in a high-school course can be perhaps brought into sharper focus by comparing them to a four-stage rocket. The success of a rocket is dependent upon the various stages of the rocket being activated at the proper time and in the correct sequence. Success in measuring a pupil's achievement depends upon factors which are also closely related and dependent upon one another.

Many of the measurement-of-achievement "rockets" fail to get off the launching pad

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*The next year will see the lines of opposing interests drawn up in what might look like battle array. On one side will be the test makers ably assisted by their data processors and researchers. Against them are deployed the test users—schools, pupils, anticlassroom interrupters, and so forth. Standing off to the side are the students (who take) and the parents (who pay). It is likely that the struggle will last a long while and that it probably will end in a summit meeting which will insure compromises and permit face saving.*

*This is one side of the coin. The reverse of the coin, dealing with how teachers use measurement and appraisal, is tackled in this article by the author, who is assistant professor of education, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio. The analogy he traces is good, we think.*

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because the teacher does not have a concise definition of what he wants to measure. This knowledge is the first stage and possibly the most important. Here the misconception that broad generalizations of achievement will suffice creates an atmosphere of false confidence which will result in failure. Teachers must have a definite concept of what they are trying to measure. The achievement target must be described in terms of observable actions of the pupil. Teachers should be able to distinguish the effects of certain learnings upon the pupil's behavior. Teachers can ask themselves the question, "How will a pupil who has attained this level of achievement differ from one who has not? What should his reactions, thoughts, skills in particular situations be if he has learned the lesson?" Some of the achievements are quite obvious and relatively easy to locate and measure. Behaviors such as a pupil's knowledge of certain facts can be defined easily. For instance, a teacher can easily ascertain whether a pupil knows the chemical formula of salt; the pupil's response will satisfy the teacher as to whether this fact is known at the time of asking. However, just as the moon has a hidden side, so some high-school pupils' accomplishments are hidden. These achievements can be best defined by the effects they produced.

A case in point would be the problem involved when a teacher must determine the level of a pupil's critical thinking. Critical thinking must be measured indirectly by study of the behaviors which supposedly are indications of this complex achievement. How will a pupil solve a problem if he has developed critical thinking as contrasted to the method used by a pupil who does not have that level of achievement? This measurement is further complicated by the fact that teachers cannot agree upon the definition of critical thinking.

This is not the case in the previous example concerning table salt. There is universal agreement that the formula is  $\text{NaCl}$ .

It can be observed that as the range of behaviors which the school must teach increases, the greater the need for measurement.

After this first stage of the rocket is determined and the testing program is off the ground, the second phase now poses a problem for the teacher. This phase involves the designing of some type of instrument which measures what has been defined. The fact that the pupil's behavior has been defined is no guarantee that it can be measured. The measuring instrument need not be limited to a paper-and-pencil device. It might consist of a project, an oral recitation, a problem to solve, and so on. A teacher may find that the measuring instrument proves the definitions to be in error, just as the instruments now measuring the moon may change some theories concerning that body. If the test results are indicated to be in error, the teacher must analyze both the definition of the particular achievement measured and the measuring instrument. The study might reveal that either of them or both of them are in error.

Analysis of the measuring instrument and descriptions of pupils' behaviors are often neglected because they are chores. Teachers actually spend too little time on measurement and on perfecting their tests, partly because other teaching duties demand such a great amount of time and partly because they feel that testing is something apart from teaching. Testing should come, many teachers will argue, at the end of some unit or chapter or semester. This is a misconception and must be cleared up. Testing is teaching and teaching is testing. There really is no way to divide the two. Testing is as much a part of the method as is the use of a film to implant a concept in the minds of the pupils. Pupils should be so acclimated to testing that they will look upon it as a part of their regular learning routine. A test should not be something which is feared. It should be as commonplace in the school day as the textbook.

The third stage involves the question of the standard to be used in comparing the results. Should the pupil's individual potential be used (which, by the way, must also be determined by measurement), or the class results, or the standards in the world of which the school is a part? This does not imply that only one standard is to be used in all situations. Many factors will dictate which one or which combination of standards will be used. These factors will include the grade level of the pupil, reason why the test is given, what decision must be reached, and so on. As can be readily seen, this is a complex stage because it not only involves the above-named elements but the teacher's philosophy and the educational value system. Yet the standard must be determined. Pupils, being pupils, want to be told how they are doing. They want to know where they are strong and where they are weak in a course. Teachers, if they are worth anything, must give them sound answers based on as reliable data as can be obtained. This is possible only through the means of carefully thought out measurement.

The last stage of the achievement rocket which should send the measurement plan into orbit is concerned with the technique

of making correct inferences from the data provided. Many of the benefits and values of a good measurement plan are lost at this point. A teacher must recognize the limitations of measurement. If a decision based upon measurement proves to be wrong, teachers are inclined to lay the blame at the doorstep of measurement. Actually the fault may lie with the inferences drawn. Again it is the human factor which may be the basis for the mistake. One can hardly blame a test for a mistake any more than one could say that accidents are caused by automobiles.

All four stages demand a great deal of time and earnest effort on the part of classroom teachers. Teachers cannot expect perfect results the first time or even the second or third. Achievement measurement "rockets" like other rockets are complex devices and will fail in many instances. These failures should not discourage teachers, but rather provide the motivation for further improvement. One might suppose that the perfect measuring instrument will never be made. Teachers must recognize their part in this progress and accept the responsibility for improving the measurement aspect of teaching. If they don't, their teaching will remain forever "earthbound."



## School and Community

We suggest eight ways by which schools can develop a community approach to education:

1. Evolve a program based on the needs and interests of people in the community.
2. Provide and develop leadership for servicing community needs.
3. Build a curriculum around the major processes of community living.
4. Provide the facilities for community forums, recreation, adult education and other activities of a community nature.
5. Utilize community resources in every phase of

the school program.

6. Engage in continuous research and study of the community so that its problems can be located and identified.
7. Serve as a repository of community information.
8. Serve as an agency of coordination in the community's educational efforts.

These points represent a notion of education which regards the educational process as a community-wide function.—ORDEN C. SMUCKER in *Educational Leadership*.

# *Buying for the School Store*

By ALVIN D. GRAHAM

A KNOTTY PROBLEM for any retail business is what merchandise to buy and how much of it to stock. In the school store of Mamaroneck High School we try to solve this problem with buying policies that further the educational aims of our school. We have made a few mistakes and have stumbled, but we are making good progress toward a solution. We had much practice last year since our purchases amounted to almost \$3,000.

About four years ago, after meetings with our principal, General Association sponsors, school store sponsor, and student representatives, we agreed that the store was to be primarily an educational facility. It was to be a learning situation, where students could develop skills in salesmanship and make the management decisions required for running a retail store. It was to be an opportunity to practice accounting and inventory control.

A secondary aim was to make available to students and teachers items desirable for school work. We planned to sell any merchandise that could be called the high-school students' "tools of the trade."

This article tells how our buying policies further our two aims.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*The author is a teacher of business education and sponsor of the school store at Mamaroneck Senior High School, Mamaroneck, New York. He describes how students manage the store and that includes accounting, inventory control, ordering, pricing, and, of course, selling. Even if your school does not have a store, this article makes good material for business education classes, particularly those in merchandising.*

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In dollar volume, our largest sales are of review books. We sell only the titles requested by teachers. (No teacher has asked us to stock the review books "with answers.") We will not sell a review book if a teacher is not ready to have his class use it, and we will restrict sale to students whose names are on a list furnished by the teacher.

This is effective in two ways. Teachers like our procedure because they are relieved of all paper work. The school store staff comes face to face with a problem in retailing—how to keep fast-moving essential items in stock without overbuying. All review book publishers except one give us a small discount so that we sell to students at prices no higher than they would have to pay if the teacher sold the books in his classroom.

We believe that schools should encourage students to own good books. Since students are more likely to buy—and read—if the books are at hand, we stock many paperbacks, both single and multiple copies. All of our paperbacks are ordered on recommendation of teachers. Only a few are required reading, and most are suggested to students as additional resources. Every day a few students come in to browse at the racks, and eventually buy. We would rather see a boy or girl invest in a good paperback, than waste his money on, for example, a rabbit's-foot key ring in school colors.

We handle few booster items—not a pennant, emblem, button, or noisemaker in the store. (We leave these items for the clubs to sell.) Our aim is to encourage a philosophy of salesmanship which is based on helping a customer to decide what his needs are and how our merchandise helps to satisfy them. Most "booster" merchandise does not fit in with this.

We buy merchandise of high quality for two reasons. First, this policy gives the sales staff an opportunity to develop real selling ability. For example, we sell good 30-cent ball-point pens when we could more easily sell 10-cent ones. Our student salesman can offer a slide rule that sells for \$1.25 but is also prepared to present the advantages of a much better one that sells for \$6.50. School store salesmen have had to learn how to demonstrate a brand-new product, a plastic loose-leaf paper reinforcement. Ours is the only store in town to stock this article.

Second, we believe we can best help our students to become wise consumers by providing the opportunity for them to consider value as well as price. We hope to develop pride in ownership and use of school supplies of high quality.

As an offshoot of our own enterprise, we experimented at one time with the sale of student-manufactured merchandise. Student manufacturers supplied us with costume jewelry, hand-lettered scarves, metal book-holders, printed stationery, and picture frames. Predicting consumer demand, negotiating contracts with the student manufacturers, and pricing the goods were some of the valuable experiences gained by the staff of our school store, while our student manufacturers learned how to meet production problems. However, I think that the most valuable lesson for all was that work had to be perfect to be acceptable, not just "pretty good." It took only a few losses resulting from rejected goods to drive this lesson home. Unfortunately, our student entrepreneurs were graduated and we have had no more student-manufactured items for sale. Because this project had many potentialities for learning and teaching, I am constantly on the lookout for talent in our

art classes, in our metal shop, and in our woodworking shop.

When we began, our decisions were made by a buying committee. We soon learned that this was cumbersome. We now operate very informally, as most small businesses do, on the basis of want slips and oral suggestions from our sales staff to our student manager or inventory controller. Final decisions are made by the three of us at brief sessions held almost every afternoon.

Orders are sent out on purchase requisition blanks designed by one of our first managers. When merchandise arrives it is unpacked, checked and marked, and then placed in stock by our inventory controller. Invoices are recorded in the accounts payable ledger by the head accountant, who notifies the treasurer when to pay bills. They see that the bills are paid on time, and almost always take advantage of the cash discount. We price our merchandise realistically because we cannot develop selling ability if our prices are far below those of our competitors. Besides, we do not want to set prices so low that we take advantage of local businessmen. The result is that most of our merchandise is sold at about the same price as in local stores.

Is our school store successful? Certain students on our staff who had a low level of ambition or who had no plans after graduation are now arranging for further education in retailing, accounting, and business administration.

Our manager reports that when the "Help Wanted" sign goes up, he always receives more applications than he has positions to fill.

We started with \$50 of borrowed capital. Our accountant's latest balance sheet shows net worth of over \$650.

# Confusion and Problem Solving

By WILLIAM J. PAULI

A STUDENT SOLVES A PROBLEM when his initial state of confusion ends in understanding. If his initial state is understanding, he is not confronted with a problem. If the terminal state is confusion, the student has not solved the problem.

Relating confusion to problem solving is not a new thought. Professor Brownell, in defining problems, included this sentence in his definition: "The subject experiences perplexity in the problem situation, but he does not experience utter confusion."<sup>1</sup> In the same thoughtful article Professor Brownell stressed the subjective character of problems. One student's difficult problem may be another student's simple exercise. The subjective nature of problems adds another element of confusion to teaching.

John Dewey in his classic work on the thinking process wrote: ". . . The origin of thinking is some perplexity, confusion, or doubt."<sup>2</sup> According to Dewey, confusion, the

feeling of difficulty in a situation, is the stimulus as well as the origin of thinking. Without this felt difficulty, appeals to an individual to think would be futile.

My purpose is to discuss problems and problem solving explicitly in terms of the confusion surrounding both. As a classroom teacher I see confusion and the subjective character of problems revealed both visibly and audibly on the brows and lips of my students. As a teacher searching for better ways of teaching the solution of problems, I find myself threading through a maze of confusion on the meaning of problems, their uses, their uselessness, their psychology, the opinions of experts, and the contradictory opinion of other experts.

Everybody would agree that learning to think and learning to solve problems are the highest and most important objectives of education. While all would agree on the objectives, few would reach these objectives by the same route. Indeed, there are some who even doubt whether thinking and problem solving can actually be taught. Such doubts—most teachers at some period of their life must experience such doubts—present the teacher with a most frustrating contradiction. If thinking and problem solving are the noblest objectives of education, and if these objectives cannot be taught, how then can they be reached? The solution of this contradiction begins with confusion and ends with the creation of necessary weapons to overcome the confusion. Before we trace the connection of confusion to problem solving, let us define our terms more clearly.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*If you read this keen analysis, you will soon discover that "confusion" is not to be equated with bedlam, agitation, or the result of a clinical mental state of indecision or imbalance. The use of the word, according to the author, indicates "a discomfiture of mind, perplexity, doubt, and uncertainty"—that is, the "subjective confusion of the learner as he faces a problem." This is not the only item needing definition. The author makes clear what he means by "problem solving." But it is better not to cover too much in the Editor's Note. Let's come to the point and say that the writer does a thought-provoking analysis. He is from San Jose, California, where he teaches mathematics at Woodrow Wilson Junior High School.*

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<sup>1</sup> William A. Brownell, "Problem Solving." *The Psychology of Learning*, 41st Yearbook, Part II, National Society for the Study of Education (Chicago, 1942), p. 416.

<sup>2</sup> John Dewey, *How We Think* (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1910), p. 12.

*Problem Solving and Problems Defined*

Problem solving as used here denotes all learning of a conceptual nature. Problems may be solved alone by the student or they may be solved with the help of the teacher. When the student is taught how a particular problem is solved, he learns how others have solved the problem. The skill of the teacher in that case determines how much problem solving takes place in the mind of the student and how much takes place in the mind of the teacher. The latter may take a flying trip with the student to reach the destination; or he may lead the student by the hand, pointing out the interesting and important landmarks along the way, the bridges that link vital centers, and the foundations on which the connecting links rest. In this case the teacher is more concerned with the student's acquiring expert knowledge of the terrain and the route traveled than he is with the final destination. When to fly and when to explore are themselves problems for the teacher. The student and teacher do not always agree on the best way of traveling.

I like Professor Fehr's short definition of a problem as a "situation in which there is need for attaining a goal, but the route to the goal is unknown."<sup>3</sup>

Professor Fehr believes that problem consciousness needs to be developed in the student. What a good problem attitude should be he states in these words: "A problem is something with which I am supposed to have difficulty. It is a situation which I must explore to bring to bear all my past learning in order to get the answer. It will take a little time and a lot of thinking to solve it."<sup>4</sup>

The literature on problem solving often arises out of the attempts to make the solution of problems in mathematics easier and more palatable. Regardless of how the issue is approached, whether from the standpoint

of interest, need, or meaning, the objective is to improve the problem-solving ability of the student. This is as it should be. We want to be able to transform problems, which are initially confusing and difficult, into tasks that are clear, simple, and easy. Problem solving may be defined as the process of transforming the difficult into the easy, the complex into the simple, and the confusing into the clear and understandable. Teachers who are searching for ways of teaching the solution of problems free of the element of confusion are seeking in vain for a modern philosopher's stone. It is the characteristic of problems to be confusing, as it is the characteristic of the whole to contain parts.

Conclusions on the nature of problem solving are by no means limited to mathematics, but are applicable to all fields where problems exist. Indeed, it is precisely the conviction that problem solving is a general process which keeps alive the hope that a mastery of the process will improve the amount of transfer of learning. No one, of course, any longer believes that exercising some particular faculty of the mind is the path through which maximum transfer can be accomplished. Nevertheless, faculty psychology, like the old soldier, never completely dies, but merely fades away to reappear in modern dress. Instead of exercising the mind on "tough" subjects the modern version is to learn all about a process called "problem solving," master this process, and then use this knowledge as a master key to unlock all doors labeled "Problems."

Serious writers on problem solving—most writers on this topic are quite serious—would emphatically disclaim any intent to fabricate a magic wand with which to solve any and all problems. Yet these same writers would readily agree that their hope is to improve or to facilitate the solution of problems. How can this be done without creating the illusion that problem solving is an "it" whose mastery will open even the strangest doors? Can problem solving really

<sup>3</sup> Howard F. Fehr, "Teaching the Solution of Verbal Problems in Algebra," *California Mathematics Council Bulletin*, XII (May, 1954), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

be taught? Or, to phrase the question in a more answerable light, what is there in the study of the problem-solving process which is most likely to be useful in all problem situations? This last question is much more modest in its hope and expectations, and, for that very reason, more conducive of a fruitful answer. In answering this question, we shall find that confusion is the one common ingredient in all problem situations. Wherever there are problems begging to be solved, there will be found people in various states of confusion. In the broadest sense, thinking, problem solving, and transfer of learning are synonymous terms in which individuals are confronted by confusion. The process of thinking, of solving problems, of discovering identical and related elements in seemingly unrelated and different situations is the process of overcoming confusion.

#### *Confusion Defined*

Confusion is used here in the sense of a discomfiture of mind, a state of being disconcerted, of experiencing perplexity, doubt, and uncertainty. Confusion is not used here in the psychiatric sense of a mental state characterized by unstable attention, poor perception of reality, disorientation, and inability to act coherently. The former state implies that the individual has the intelligence and experience to penetrate the confusion blocking his goal. The latter state applies to the confusion of patients who need clinical help. The confusion in their case is so overwhelming, or their perception of reality so poor, that they see no problem and experience no confusion. The confusion in their situation is noted by the observer.

The confusion we are concerned with is the subjective confusion of the learner as he faces a problem. We are, of course, also concerned with objective forms of confusion which prevent active and concerted concentration. The confusion which we couple with bedlam is the objective kind of confu-

sion we try to avoid, because that kind of confusion obstructs problem solving. There is one kind of objective confusion which does grow out of the subjective confusion of the learner. Not all students can contain their excitement within bounds. Excessive confusion within the immature creates visible agitation. This outward manifestation of inward confusion appears whenever problems are not solved within reasonable time limits. Some students can stand inward confusion only a short time before they demonstrate their capacity to stand external confusion a much longer period of time. Daily the teacher faces the problem of providing exactly the right kind of confusion. In one case the students may not have the necessary background to overcome the confusion; in other cases the confusion is not great enough to be challenging. Dewey expressed the mental juggling the teacher must practice in these words: "The best thinking occurs when the easy and difficult are duly proportioned to each other. The easy and familiar are equivalents, as are the strange and the difficult. Too much that is easy gives no ground for inquiry; too much of the hard renders inquiry hopeless."<sup>5</sup>

Learning to mix the easy and difficult, the clear and the confusing, so that they are "duly proportioned to each other," means learning to become an effective teacher. This kind of mixing problem always exists in teaching. It is the most important aspect of the problem of individual differences. The question here is that of producing the most effective kind of thinking by providing the most carefully organized material fitted to the learner's past experience out of which can grow the most fruitful inquiry. The difference between a good teacher and a poorer one is that the former solves this mixing problem more often than does the latter. The effective teacher anticipates the kind of confusion the learner is capable of overcoming and plans his lesson accordingly. The teacher who wants his students

<sup>5</sup> Dewey, *op. cit.* p. 222.

to pause and reflect must set the stage and frame the goal in such a way that the answer the student is made to seek corresponds to the solution the understanding teacher wishes him to discover. This is no simple trick but one which calls forth the highest creative talents of the teacher. The role of science and methodology is in organizing the material to be learned and in mapping the terrain with necessary landmarks to help the faltering explorer maintain his quest. The teacher can help the student most by exciting him enough to make the solution of the problem both fascinating and possible.

#### *Confusion Resolved*

For any individual the key to successful problem solving lies in his attitude toward confusion. For all of us, no matter what the problem might be, in whatever field we might be engaged, if we desire the solution of the problem seriously enough, we must also decide at the same time how much confusion we can stand. We can learn to overcome confusion or we can be overcome by it. The first step in overcoming confusion is to acquire a realistic attitude toward it. Part of this attitude is a skepticism of all approaches to problem solving which purport to be clear and simple. Techniques which remove the confusion from problems are at best methods of reaching the goal without knowledge of the path. Shortcuts through dense forests are sometimes necessary, but if the necessary is understanding of the forest, shortcuts will enable us to see the least. In learning, our objective is not merely to reach a specific goal, an answer which can be found in a book or which someone can tell us, but to attain understanding of the relationships which connect the answer to the question. In personal problems, such as a painful illness, relief from pain is our only quest. How the physician solves the problem for us is purely academic and of little

interest except to those who like to dwell upon their operations.

In solving problems we move from the complex to the simple. Simplicity is always an ultimate goal, but to reach this goal many problems have to be solved and much confusion overcome. Simplicity follows understanding and does not precede it. The teacher, of course, has the obligation and the problem of breaking the complex into simple steps which the learner can follow. Only after the learner has followed in the footsteps of those whose knowledge of the terrain is superior to his can he arrive at the simplicity which is the result of understanding. The more the learner is led to discover each step along his path of learning, the greater will be his confusion and the greater will be his conquest.

The desire to make our teaching problems simple and free of confusion will always prove to be chimerical. The more difficult the learning, the more confusion both teacher and learner must learn to overcome. Teaching of problem solving, or, perhaps more accurately, providing fruitful problem-solving experiences for pupils, will never become a simple effortless task. To be sure, specific problems can be solved very often in extremely simple ways. For the teacher, the key question must always be: Simple for whom? For the teacher or for the learner? An equally important question must also be: Is the simplest method the one in which the most learning takes place? New knowledge, new research, and more discovery can bring us more effective ways of overcoming confusion. We should not expect to learn new ways of avoiding confusion unless we are also resigned to avoiding learning. Confusion is not to be regarded as an intrusion to make problem solving needlessly difficult, but as the essential barrier to hurdle. Confusion is the catalytic agent that generates the problem-solving process, and thinking is the solvent.

# THE FIVE FINGERS OF ENGLISH

## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Balanced emphasis on reading, writing, speaking, hearing and viewing, and appreciation of literature are commonly regarded as the major components of the English teaching program in secondary schools. There is a place, of course, for correct usage but mainly as a thread that runs through all the five fingers.*

*Some time ago, English programs devoted more time per week to literary appreciation than to purposeful instruction in speaking, writing, or listening. The trend in many schools seems to be toward providing more time for practice in developing the skills of communication: writing, speaking, listening, observing, viewing, and so forth. This arrangement does not minimize the importance of the study of literature. It places it in appropriate perspective.*

*The fact that The Clearing House has received many manuscripts on one or another aspect of English teaching is a welcome sign that teachers in what we often refer to as the humanities wish to be heard. Maybe this is a reaction to heavy recent emphasis on science, mathematics, and modern foreign language. It is more likely, however, not to be that at all. It is probable that the teachers sense the increasing need for pushing ahead toward wider consensus or assessment of English programs and English instruction in junior and senior high schools.*

*The articles in this series of four deal with the teaching of writing to college preparatory students, the teaching of poetry, the role of the English teacher, and the use of the daily newspaper as part-time textbook.*

*Angell Mathewson joined the faculty of the Pennsylvania State College at Edinboro, this fall, as associate professor of English. When he wrote this paper he was head of the English department, Central High School, Trenton, New Jersey. It is adapted from a lecture given to a workshop for teachers of English, supported by the Ford Fund for the Advancement of Education and held at Rutgers University.*

*Lawrence H. Maddock is associate professor of English, State Teachers College, California, Pennsylvania.*

*Harry H. Matlack, Jr., is editorial aide, Curriculum Office, Public Schools, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

*Kenneth A. Stewart resides in Napa, California, where he teaches English in the secondary schools.*

## English Teaching in School and College

By ANGELL MATHEWSON

BEFORE ORGANIZING THESE COMMENTS, I told myself quite emphatically that I do know what to teach high-school pupils about writing and that I hold strong convictions about how to do it. If I don't, then how have I managed to hold a job teaching English for so many years?

The objectives in teaching high-school English are neither complex nor hard to understand. The college-bound student needs to be able to read abstract material

with good comprehension, he needs to develop an extensive and discriminating vocabulary, he needs to be able to think straight, and he must learn to write clearly, correctly, concisely, and with some degree of fluency and force. His achievement in all of these skills will be reflected in his writing. These aims are simple and easy to state, but the route to the achievement of them is devious and obstructed by appalling obstacles. Am I then, after all, as a

high-school teacher, competent to do this job? What aptitudes must I possess? What are these obstacles that I must teach my pupils how to overcome?

There is a schism between the teacher of English in high school and the teacher of college English which at first glance appears to be difficult to bridge. A golf pro is needed to train another golfer, a good swimmer to teach another to swim, a carpenter or a plumber to teach the apprentice his trade. Is it not, then, a sound analogy to say that a talented writer is required to teach another to write? Then I am forced to ask myself the question: Am I a good writer? And I have to make this reply: In a creative sense, no. I have written dissertations, I have dabbled in journalism, I have shipped articles off to educational magazines, and some of them have been published. But I am not a writer, or at least I am only a hack writer, a sort of Grub Street drudge. And what of my high-school colleagues, the teachers of English in the secondary schools of this country? I wish I could say that they are all better writers than I and thus better qualified to teach writing; but since I am familiar with the conditions under which they work and the pressures to which they have to submit as a part of their daily routine, I am fairly certain that their average competence in writing is but little better than my own. The environment of the high-school English teacher is seldom conducive to creative thought. Teaching loads in excess of 150 pupils a day are the usual mode, and schedules are exacting and enervating. The typical teacher of secondary English is not likely to get from his environment either the inspiration or the leisure necessary for creative writing.

But with college teachers of English it is an altogether different story. Rust Hills, in an article in the May 9, 1959, edition of the *Saturday Review* entitled "The Big Trend in Little Magazines," makes this plain in the following excerpt:

... The old adage about college teaching, "Publish or Perish," presupposes a vast number of places to publish in—and the universities have had to meet this need themselves by subsidizing academic little magazines.

Thus, a great many of the contributors will be teachers of English in universities. But as a great proportion of our writers are now teachers of English in the universities anyway, this shift of the little magazine to the academic (or of the academic quarterlies to the creative) is a very natural thing. In the 1920s and 1930s, writers in the universities were thought of as in the first wave of fuddy-duddyism—Henry Van Dyke was a professor at Princeton. Nowadays the colleges are a bastion of the avant-garde—Saul Bellow teaches at Minnesota. And because the departments of English have become more "creative" the academic quarterlies that matter now are those that publish some fiction and poetry, however little. Thus, it carries more prestige for a professor to have his article appear in *Kenyon* or *Sewanee* than in *The Publications of the Modern Language Society* or *College English*, which are now felt to be dry and stuffy.

And speaking of the *avant-garde*, let us not forget that Nabokov, creator of precious *Lolita*, teaches at Cornell. Arthur Mizener, also a Cornell professor, would hardly have written *The Far Side of Paradise* except for his earlier connection with Princeton. Yale and Harvard have nurtured the inspiration of Archibald MacLeish. Rutgers University and the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference have helped John Ciardi to progress with his creative career, while he in turn has served both places well by teaching writing and permitting his growing prestige to reflect upon them. Thus, we see that there is a natural bond between creative writing and college teaching. With high-school teaching this is not the situation at all, and that may help to explain why teachers of college English and teachers of high-school English sometimes do not understand one another well or try as hard as they might to agree on basic terms and standards of achievement.

#### *Colleges Must Teach High-School English*

The colleges, however, have never listed creative power in writing as an entrance requirement: all they have ever asked is

ordinary competence. And their great complaint has always been that many freshmen who cannot demonstrate competence in expository writing do, by one means or another, somehow gain admission to college. Actually, there are these two kinds of English in college: the kind taught to English majors and graduate students and the kind that is needed by the future doctors, lawyers, scientists, and businessmen. College English teachers would prefer to concern themselves solely with the former; the English training needed by the majority of college students, they maintain, should be finished off in high school. And a few colleges do proceed upon the assumption that this has been accomplished. Princeton, for example, offers no course in freshman composition, although some of my acquaintances on the Princeton English faculty have privately admitted to me that even there they have encountered some freshmen whose mastery of composition fell somewhat short of perfection. Most colleges, however, glumly accept the idea that many of their freshmen will be cripples in composition. They give their entering classes classification tests, exempt a few of the best from further instruction in writing, permit the majority to take freshman composition, and require the poorest 30 per cent or 40 per cent to take remedial English before they are even allowed to study composition. Thus, there are two types of English—a "working" type for the majority, and special study in appreciation, analysis, and creativity for a precious minority. The first type is really high-school English. It should be completed in high school. Sometimes, it is, but usually not, and is consequently continued and generally terminated at the end of the freshman year in college. Scholarly teachers of college English have a low opinion of freshman English, of course, and many of them refuse to have anything whatsoever to do with it. From their point of view the problem is how to put high-school English back into the high school

and have the study of it completed satisfactorily there.

Let us now see what some of the colleges say about the writing skills needed for success in college work. Here are some bits of a statement from Harvard:

English is not specifically to encourage aesthetic sensibility for its own sake, but to provide a general intellectual training in reading, thinking, and writing which will help all sorts of students to express themselves ably and rationally in a common medium of intellectual exchange.

The course must put some emphasis on analytical thinking, on the logical relation of ideas, on the intellectual rather than the aesthetic virtues.

The student in English A stands or falls by his ability and progress as a writer. The bulk of the writing from one year's end to the other should be expository, construing the word expository very liberally, so that it may include as wide a formal range as possible—argument, personal reflection, biography, criticism. It must possess genuine subject matter together with genuine purpose in dealing with it.

Students [are taught] how to use their own experience and observation, how to find material for reasoned discussion in their school life in the communities where they have grown up.

Such, at one time, was the content of English A at Harvard. But the content *was such* only because it had not been taught in high school, for the writer (Theodore Morrison) goes on to complain that "students never read with as much understanding, think with as much logic, or express themselves with as much command as we should like. To teach writing is not to police bad usage or to lay down formal rules of rhetoric and composition. It is to make an attack on this fundamental three-fold problem, beginning at the level of reading and understanding. Colleges and schools, working together with mutual respect and confidence, can do something to improve this situation. The problem is common to all education; it differs in stages of difficulty, not in kind, from grammar school to secondary school, and from secondary school to college, and from college to the graduate school."

Compare this statement from Harvard to

one published by the College Board in 1941 in *A Description of Examination Subjects*:

The test in composition will assume continuous and thorough training in mechanics. This training implies a mastery in practice of the essentials of grammar as an aid to the discussion of phraseology, syntax, and general structure, and of problems of meaning and interpretation. It implies also habitual correctness in punctuation, capitalization, and sentence and paragraph construction. In addition, it assumes a reasonable maturity of vocabulary, and such a command of varied and flexible sentence forms as may be expected from vigorous and systematic training in language as the effective instrument of thought. Such instruction necessitates constant and painstaking practice by the candidate in criticism and revision of his own written work.

This training should be directed to the expansion and intelligent ordering of the student's experience, and the increase of his sense of power and enjoyment in writing.

Torrents have flowed under the bridge since this was written in 1941, but it still stands as an excellent statement of the competence in writing which every student needs for success in college—not just the English majors, but every student.

Statements from other colleges support the position taken in the two quotations I have just presented. An excerpt from a pamphlet issued by Rutgers reads as follows:

All other subjects, including mathematics, presuppose a command of English. A moment's reflection will remind you that English is the medium in which you receive all your instruction and in which you write or speak your answers to all the questions you are asked. You even think in English if it is your native language. In a sense, then, everything that you have studied and will study may be called "English," and everything that you learn in your English classes will help you to master your other subjects.

Writing for Hamilton College about freshman English, Dwight N. Lindley says:

Teaching Freshman English is an important task, for in the freshman year many students have their last chance to learn how to read, write, and think in their own language. It is important because good standards of writing are now shockingly neglected. This neglect of good writing is, I think, symptomatic of sloppy and fuzzy-minded thinking every-

where apparent. During the second semester at Hamilton the student is put through a rigorous course in writing. One kind of essay, called a class theme, he writes every other week during a class meeting. In a 55-minute class period, he is expected to write between 350 and 400 words, and in order to pass the second semester, he must write two of these class essays without a disqualifying error.

Part of a statement from Trinity College goes as follows:

The English Department expects entering Freshmen to have these qualifications:

1. They should have sufficient mastery of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure so that they will need no extensive elementary training in mechanics. Those seriously deficient should strengthen themselves privately, perhaps through paid tutoring. The Department offers no formal remedial course.
2. In composition, students should have had a considerable amount of practice in writing corrected by a teacher. In reading, they should have been trained to find the author's main idea, noting how his idea is elaborated step by step, and how abstract themes are developed by the use of concrete material.

In an article in the *New Jersey English Leaflet* for December, 1958, C. F. Main wrote: "How can a high school English teacher best prepare his students for college? I am convinced that there is only one answer to this question. The teacher who wants his students to succeed in college must require them to write, write, and rewrite."

And, finally, there is the statement by Dr. Conant in his report. Although this statement must have been disappointing to many English teachers because of the aspects of English which Dr. Conant ignored, he did feel it important to teach composition. He recommended that each teacher should read and correct a paper of respectable length from each of his pupils once a week and that no English teacher should have more than 100 pupils in four classes. Meager as they are, these recommendations are sound.

Thus there are two brands of English—the high school kind that isn't finished in high school but ends in the freshman year

of college, and the specialized, aesthetic, and creative variety which belongs strictly to the college and the graduate school. Now let's revert to the question I raised in the beginning about my competence to teach the first variety. I freely confessed that I lack creative power. Well, most creative writers teach themselves. Jack London developed his writing from his own experiences. Mark Twain and William Dean Howells progressed from printing to journalism to creative writing, and Walt Whitman did much the same thing. There are exceptions, of course: Eugene O'Neill learned something about how to write plays in Professor George Pierce Baker's "47 Workshop." The writing that needs to be taught in high school is chiefly a discipline that requires fortitude, determination, hard work, persistence, and Puritanical devotion to a sense of duty and obligation. It is a plodding business, often very dull. Possibly that is why some former English teachers have forsaken the basic aims of the language disciplines for the lotus land of language arts. For the rigors of the Number One type of English teaching I do feel that I possess the qualifications, and for the higher levels of English teaching I also confess that I have a liking and a yearning, but obviously not a strong talent. Perhaps it is just as well that it is so. Both kinds of English have to be taught, and you can't have one without the other.

#### *Faults of High-School Textbooks*

What may be done to remove some of the obstacles to the effective teaching of writing in high school?

First let me say that I feel that textbook publishers have not, on the whole, been helpful in developing useful classroom aids for teaching grammar and rhetoric in high school. Most of the leading ones are now selling series of books to use from seventh through twelfth grade. The formula for the make-up of these books is usually worked out by an editor employed by the company,

together with two or three teachers who have established good reputations in secondary English. These people decide on the table of contents for each number of the six-volume series. Then a publisher's agent farms out the actual writing of the directions and exercise material, grammar lessons, and composition assignments to a fairly large number of classroom teachers, who serve as hack writers and receive an acknowledgment in small print on the flyleaf.

After company editors have streamlined the raw materials which these writers submit, the series comes out and then the salesmen do their level best to get school-wide, city-wide, county-wide, or even state-wide adoptions. Millions of these texts are sold, but they never meet the real needs of any given school population. For one thing they can never take adequately into consideration the ability-level grouping that is done in different schools. Most grammar and composition books are written for only one kind of English class—college preparatory. The ones written for business English classes usually match the needs of the pupils for whom they were intended more nearly accurately than any others, for it is here that the requirements can be gauged correctly. The textbooks that I have seen for teaching grammar and composition to terminal students have usually been watered down so much that I would consider the content almost worthless.

But we are concerned here only with composition books for college preparatory pupils. I know of several that I consider quite adequate for teaching mechanics in connection with exercises in writing, but I know of none that will provide the exercises in writing. Nearly all of them pretend to do so, and I suspect that many teachers limit their writing assignments almost entirely to the ones offered in these books, but they are not satisfactory because they seldom meet the needs of the local situation.

A major criticism of these composition textbooks is that they are designed to destroy the originality and initiative of the teacher. They place a premium on laziness. A major selling point for most of them is that teachers' manuals will be supplied free of charge, as well as teachers' keys to the exercises in grammar, punctuation, etc. These aids mechanize the teaching. The manual tells the teacher what exercises to assign, and the key gives her all of the answers—often debatable answers, but teacher and class will usually wind up by accepting them as authoritative. With such efficient aids as these, it is possible to keep a class busy doing exercises on language study, and since the composition assignments in the book seem rather silly anyhow, it is an easy matter to neglect them or to forget about them altogether.

This trend is wrong. The grammar must be taught. The pupils must know the requirements for standard English if they are to criticize their own writing, but the practice in the actual writing is of primary importance—not the grammar. And this is where the performance of teachers of secondary English has been growing weaker, aided and abetted and even encouraged by the manufacturers and sellers of textbooks, who are out to make a profit and do not mind if they cause a deterioration in teacher performance while making it. This seems like a harsh criticism but the popularity of the English workbooks surely proves the point. Here the stress is entirely wrong. Workbooks never let the pupil see the forest for the trees. In them the learning process is fragmented. They offer no writing exercises whatsoever—only the endless correction of errors by someone else. There is no provision for adapting to the pupils' individual requirements. But they do keep the pupils busy and quiet, the teacher has the key with answers in it, and payday will come again, whether or not any compositions are written by pupils and read by the teacher.

In the high school where I taught until this fall we adopted a grammar for the tenth grade, a rhetoric for the eleventh grade, and a handbook for the twelfth grade. And we said that everyone must write at least one 400-500 word composition every other week and one or two longer papers each year. We would have preferred to require a paper to be written every week, but our classes were too large to permit this, and we did not have the assistance of home readers.

I have great faith in the effectiveness of that system, but I also value Dr. Diederich's\* lay reader project highly for the excellence of the writing assignments provided by it. These assignments are all substantial and challenging, nearly all of them based upon problem solving or the interpretation of reading. They are never vapid or silly or unworthy of the intelligence of the writers. They are arranged in orderly sequence. Nearly all stress unity, coherence, and emphasis through expository or argumentative writing. They are designed to direct the pupils' thinking into the proper channels of logic, e.g., from generalities to the citation of concrete details, pertinent examples, and so on. They teach by the scientific method, requiring pupils to examine all available evidence before expressing any generalized opinion. Dr. Diederich's plan for teaching composition to college preparatory students in high school is superior to any plan I have ever seen in any series of textbooks because it makes certain that the writing will actually be done, and will be read and criticized by a teacher. The study of grammar and mechanics is of secondary importance. It is important, but should come after the need has been discovered through practice in writing.

It all comes back to writing. Once the student has written things like some of the following excerpts from compositions written by my pupils, the correct motiva-

\* Paul B. Diederich, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, New Jersey.

tion for the study of the structure of language will have been established.

1. It was a beautiful written book.
2. She has and still contributes a great deal to the stage.
3. Her innocent name has been scandalized mercilessly.
4. He could not earn sufficient wages to substantiate his family's care.

5. Her voice reminded him of a nightingale smoothing the rugged brow of night.

6. After attending a confluence of the witches, Macbeth feels better.

Just these few samples are perhaps sufficient to show why compositions have to be written and why they must be read by the teachers in high school. All the workbook exercises in the world are utterly useless in elimination of errors such as these. Handbooks are necessary for teaching a vocabulary of terms for criticism; rhetorics, for pointers on style and logic; grammars, for teaching basic linguistic structure, but the composition textbook series is a monstrosity likely to do more harm than good.

#### *Drawbacks of Objective Tests*

Another serious obstacle to the effective teaching of written composition has been the objective test—another device that has been greatly overworked by lazy teachers who cite fair grades as their excuse for using it. *Gestalt* psychology teaches us that pupils should be taught to evaluate readings holistically. Accordingly, many examination questions on the reading should be of the essay type. Questions of the objective type, especially of the specific recall or true-false varieties, afford the pupils no opportunity to demonstrate their ability to organize and write connected discourse. Essay questions, on the other hand, confront them with the challenge to organize their thoughts on the assigned topic, and then to develop them convincingly by amplifying general statements with adequate proof in the form of details, facts, examples, comparisons, obverse statements, and so on.

The questions should usually deal with the readings required by the course of study for use in common by all of the members of a class.

Here are two samples of essay test questions which would be suitable for use in high school:

1. What is Gray trying to say in his *Elegy, Written in a Country Churchyard*? What is the message behind the following quotation?

"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

2. By appropriate and detailed allusions, prove that Lamb's "Dissertation on Roast Pig" is a dissertation and not a short story.

The answers to questions like these cannot be graded objectively, but such questions will afford the pupils practice in organizing good content, and they can be marked carefully also for style. The work will be harder than marking an objective test and probably the grading will be less accurate, but the pupil will progress farther toward meeting the college requirements in English by doing the written exercise on his reading. A great deal of a high school pupil's writing experience should be based on his reading; and, besides correcting errors in style, the teacher should always evaluate the pupil's selection of content and its organization.

Pupils should be required to write about books assigned for collateral reading, but to make sure that they actually read the books they should write the reviews in class, following directions given to them at the beginning of the hour. For example, here are directions for writing a review of a biography read outside of class.

#### REPORT ON A BIOGRAPHY

Discuss the subject of your biography with relation to three of the following questions.

1. Describe in detail the outstanding accomplishment of the subject of your biography.
2. What traits of character account for his achievement? How did he develop these traits?
3. Show how setting, i.e., the geographical background and historical period in which he lived, influenced the character and accomplishments of your subject.
4. Did your subject have a sense of humor? Re-

late in detail two or three anecdotes to prove that he did.

5. Was your subject eccentric, individualistic, or iconoclastic? Relate details to show how he differed from the common run of people.

6. Was he a patriotic American citizen? Relate facts and incidents to prove that he was.

7. Was your subject a good actor, i.e., clever in public relations and skillful in managing people? Relate incidents to prove that he was.

8. Was he scholarly? What accomplishments of his prove that he was?

9. Did he amass great wealth? By what means?

10. Was he charitable? Did the purpose for which he spent his wealth justify the means by which he acquired it?

#### Honors Students Should Not Diggess

Another obstacle to effective teaching of composition in high school has turned out to be—of all things—the so-called “honors” class. In many high schools pupils who achieve A or B marks in English in the tenth grade are offered their choice of electives, such as debating, dramatics, or journalism for the eleventh. Oftentimes the unintentional result has been not to broaden and intensify their learning but to limit it to the extent of the special hobby of a teacher and to exclude from it the very basic instruction for which the pupil, usually intending to go to college, has the greatest need. Just because he is fairly good in English, he is allowed to choose dramatics and may go through an entire year playing at acting, while reading no poetry, no novels, and no nonfiction, and writing scarcely anything at all. Even so, he may be intelligent enough to succeed in college, but often he may find that he will have grave difficulty meeting the requirements of his writing course when he first enters. Journalism, of course, provides training in writing, but only of one special kind. The trend in recent years in high school has been to make debating, dramatics, and journalism cocurricular, but the results for some individuals have often been disappointing. There is a place for such activities in high school, but many now think that they should be kept in the realm of the extracurricular so that no pupil with serious intentions about college may miss thor-

ough study of grammar and rhetoric and systematic practice in writing which is read and criticized by the teachers. Teacher hobbyists, sometimes with the best of intentions, often do much harm to a sound program of instruction in writing.

By way of analogy, we remember that in *Pilgrim's Progress*, Christian said to Hopeful:

If this meadow lieth along by our way side, let's go over into it. . . . So Hopeful, being persuaded by his fellow, went after him over the stile. When they were gone over, and were got into the path, they found it very easy for their feet; and withal, they, looking before them, espied a man walking as they did (and his name was Vain Confidence), so they called after him, and asked him whither that way led. He said, "To the coelestial gate." So they followed, and he went before them. . . . Vain Confidence . . . fell into a deep pit . . . and was dashed to pieces with his fall. . . . Then for their encouragement, they heard the voice of one saying, "Let thine heart be towards the highway, even the way that thou wentest, turn again."

#### Summary

I have tried to outline the problem of teaching writing in high school by first showing how it differs from that of teaching writing to English specialists in college. I next tried to explain some of the reasons why writing is often not very well taught in high school. There are many obstacles in this area that need to be overcome. I have shown what some of them are, but there are many more that I have left untouched, and all of them suggest suitable areas for investigation. I have the feeling that the teaching of writing in high school has deteriorated in recent years, but I feel sure that there are teachers with enough ingenuity and energy to start the pendulum swinging from weakness back toward strength.

Space does not permit the discussion of many kinds of writing which have a proper place in the English curriculum for college preparatory students in high school. Some of them should certainly have an opportunity to experiment with creative writing.

We hear very little nowadays about the work that Hughes Mearns did in this field, but fortunately *Scholastic Magazine* has for more than three decades issued the challenge to young pupils every year to do fine writing. The publication entitled *Literary Cavalcade* is devoted specifically to fostering this kind of writing.

The educational press has reflected much difference of opinion about whether the assignment variously known as the library theme, the research theme, or the term paper should be required in high school. Regardless of pros and cons that may be

cited, the fact remains that there is a technique of organization involved in doing this kind of writing which is required extensively in many different kinds of college courses.

My belief is that the procedure should be introduced in high school. There should be some practice in letter writing, especially in the earlier years. Experience writing, properly motivated, is another fertile field, but 90 per cent of all the writing done should probably be expository, and much of this should be based upon the reading.

## Taste and Distaste for Poetry

By LAWRENCE H. MADDOCK

THE FAMILIAR PHRASE "more truth than poetry" reflects an old notion that poetry is frivolous. Such a misgiving may have had some justification on the frontier. It has none today. We have the leisure and the opportunity to appreciate the arts. Yet a distaste for poetry is surprisingly frequent among high-school students. The typical teacher of English is a scholarly and devoted human being. But he has too often cherished his "standards" and alienated his pupils. The plain fact is that educational lag exists in the teaching of poetry, and merely to shake one's head at youthful Philistinism accomplishes nothing. Even to assign "A Psalm of Life" to be memorized for the future good of the Philistine's soul accomplishes nothing. If many students dislike poetry, then the aims and techniques of teaching poetry need to be re-examined.

Perhaps the only way to teach poetry successfully is to remember Wordsworth's dictum that the immediate end of poetry is pleasure. The philosophic insights of the poet are conveyed through the pleasure he affords the reader. And the enjoyment of poetry can be spoiled by overteaching. To distinguish unerringly between synecdoche

and metonymy is, at best, a minor accomplishment. The high-school sophomore who is trained to do so does not necessarily, or even probably, appreciate poetry. The important thing for the student is the realization that poetry expresses beauty. Even if that is all on earth he knows about it, the teacher of poetry has succeeded.

Naturally, some understanding of functional poetics is useful. Consider Coleridge's famous line "Five miles meandering with a mazy motion." Anyone is a better reader once he hears the *m* sounds. He is a still better reader once he is aware that the meaning of the line is reflected in the slow rhythm of the words. True appreciation of artistic devices, however, comes only through pleasurable experience.

Poetry is, in the highest sense, discipline. It disciplines through refining and ennobling the emotions, and it is the emotions which lift man furthest from the animals. But the discipline of poetry is as internal as daydreaming. It cannot be required from without. Moreover, it can prevail only in an atmosphere in which students are free to discover meanings and to judge values for themselves. The student may see

Robert Frost's "Mending Wall" as an example of sophisticated symbolism or he may regard it as an uncomplicated idyl. Only Frost could say that one or the other interpretation is "correct" and he resolutely says nothing about the matter. Perhaps the teacher should be as circumspect as the poet.

Besides the desirability of avoiding over-analysis, there is one bold antidote for the real or fancied dislike of poetry: a free-reading program. The essential requirement here is that the student be free to read as many poems as he chooses. There should be no specific requirement about numbers of pages to be read. One predictable result of this program is that the pupil will read more than he would if the instructor made page assignments. Guidance is the function of the teacher and should be given in the free-reading program. However, the student should be permitted to read with a clear conscience at his own level, the only level at which he will or can read with profit. Once he has begun to read poems that interest him, he can be educated. The enjoyment of limericks may lead eventually to an appreciation of *Macbeth*, but the imposition of *Macbeth* on the unready leads only to the comic books.

Where will he find poems to read? In addition to the resources of the library and the anthologies usually used as texts, he

may profitably draw on the dozens of good, inexpensive pocket-book editions of verse.

The details of any project should be designed for the particular teaching situation. It is always well, however, to encourage the student to write about what he reads. The explication of poetry may become a fascinating intellectual exercise.

The best information on whether memorization should be or should not be required comes from the students themselves, and they often report that one reason they regard poetry with distaste is that they associate it with required memorization. Poetry is an art which can be read appreciatively only in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom, and in the classroom that means freedom to memorize or not memorize. The most desirable teaching situation allows the student to memorize a poem because it is meaningful to him.

Self-selection will be no panacea for all the ills of teaching poetry. On the other hand, simply because it allows the student to read with a feeling of freedom and discovery, a free-reading project may work with surprising effectiveness. At best the pupil acquires a habit of reading poetry which continues into adult life. Much pedagogical wisdom lies in Samuel Johnson's statement that "a man ought to read just as inclination leads him; for what he reads as a task will do him little good."

## Teaching Use of the Newspaper

By HARRY H. MATLACK, JR.

"BUT I READ IT IN THE PAPER," Johnny protests in dismay as his teacher questions the accuracy of a statement.

"Did the paper quote somebody as saying it?"

"I didn't notice."

Too often they do not notice, because they have not learned to discriminate between newspaper "facts" and newspaper

"quotes." Few educators question the need for more intelligent reading and training in the evaluation of what is read. When, where, and how should this training be given to insure practical use of it? The newspaper, which will soon be as much a part of the young citizen's daily life as the milk on his doorstep, can well serve him to the extent that he is trained in the use of

it—and use in the classroom can be wide and varied.

#### *What Newspaper Should Be Used?*

Home-town papers are particularly recommended for the classroom, because, in addition to reporting events of national and world scope, they relate closely to pupils' lives: local politics, neighborhood events, nearby industry and businesses. Furthermore, these papers are discussed at home and will be the chief source of news in later years. The strengths and weaknesses of local publications should be understood. Weeklies and internationally known dailies are useful supplements in the high-school upper grades, but they do not supplant the home-town paper.

#### *Where Should the Newspaper Be Used?*

The newspaper is an exciting and stimulating source of material for many subjects at all secondary-school grade levels. In mathematics, commerce, and home economics it can help in budgeting, price comparisons, home planning, and consumer buying. Other uses of the paper in English, science, social studies, and problems of democracy will be considered in more detail.

Both oral and written English can be related to answering advertisements, discussing sports, describing news and human interest pictures, and debating current issues. Examples of excellent writing may sometimes be found in editorials, feature stories, and critical reviews. The up-to-date teacher will include an appreciation of newspaper humor, comics, the entertainment world, and syndicated features.

Here is motivation ready made. The boy who hates composition can talk or write about his favorite team with enthusiastic zeal. Girls need but little urging to write sample letters to "Dear Abby" or "Ethical Problems."

In many ways the newspaper can serve as a foundation for broad social experiences

that can be included in English as a part of general cultural growth.

The practice of skills in punctuation, in grammatical usage, in vocabulary development, and in other technical aspects of English can be enlivened by newspaper examples. Pupils can write similar material as interesting drill.

Who wants to read the whole paper? Some of the items are highly specialized, interesting to relatively few people. Intelligent skimming is a skill which should be taught, but the dangers inherent in skimming should also be considered. Headlines point up a story, true, but primarily they are written to attract attention. Pupils readily learn that the headline can be misleading if the story itself is not read. A lesson in headline writing can bring this fact home to the pupil.

The teacher of heterogeneous classes will find the newspaper valuable because varied activities can be carried on with the same general material. For example, the slow pupil can contribute through the selection and explanation of pictures from the paper which illustrate his work. He often enjoys helping to compile a clipping bureau, where the items collected will prove helpful later in the term. With assistance, he can develop skills in selection, classification, and discrimination. The clipping bureau will be appreciated by pupils doing research.

The superior pupil is often intrigued by new ideas or criticisms reported in editorials, in the sciences, in literature, or in art. His interest may be quickened along several lines by the alert teacher and he may be led to study in depth at his own maturity level. Here encouragement and help are important, as the search for knowledge is a lonely business and few are adept at it.

The almost frightening speed in the growth of scientific knowledge tends to make earth-and-space-science textbooks obsolete almost before they leave the presses.

Most American adults recall more science news items from the newspapers than from any other medium. To direct this interest on the part of high-school students, many teachers use newspapers and periodicals as "living textbooks" in the science classroom. Pupils co-operate in building permanent files of current scientific material, labeled alphabetically in each of several subject areas and kept in large folders. Textbooks are used to explain basic principles, often best illustrated by examples found in the news.

Although social studies classes have long referred to the newspaper for "current events," it is often difficult for the pupil to distinguish between sensational and significant news. "Assassination" usually has a political significance, but "murder" is seldom more than sensational. If classes are provided with identical copies of the newspaper, items can be evaluated and a standard of judgment established.

Newspaper make-up is often taught in the seventh grade, where it may be introduced by a film. Following this, bundles of papers are used daily for about a week. (Back copies can be delivered by the paper.) The role of page one is first examined, with its headline placement, leads, AP and UPI symbols, and by-lines.

Analysis of the basic pattern of the paper follows, step by step.

Editorial page cartoons mold public opinion. The power of pictures and the emotional impact of an effective cartoon should be discussed. Original cartoons might be drawn by enterprising collaborators—an "idea man" and an "artist." The class might be told that Benjamin Franklin is credited with drawing the first political newspaper cartoon in America: a snake cut into thirteen segments (the colonies) over the caption, "Unite or Die."

Today's paper takes the place of the public forum and town meeting. It reports facts, problems, attitudes of people—not "answers." Sometimes a newspaper slants

material to appeal to a segment of the public; sometimes it presents "the will of the people," a necessary function in preserving democracy. The social studies teacher, realizing this province of the paper, can use it as a springboard to develop discussions in problems of democracy. Pupils old enough to discuss such questions do not need "right" answers to problems which trouble the finest minds of our times. Experience shows that best results are obtained when the teacher does not act as a final authority but leads the class to appreciate the complexity of a problem and the reasons why it is not readily solved.

#### *The Influence of the Press*

An editor may see his newspaper as a mirror of life. If the mirror reflects clearly and accurately that part of life which interests its readers, the newspaper is doing a job.

But that alone is not enough. The best newspaper editor also arouses and molds public opinion. He exposes corruption, takes political sides, leads drives for the common good. He has integrity and, if the truth be known, just a little idealism. This is reflected in his paper.

The freedom to influence public opinion is essential to a free press. However, improper use of it can prove harmful. Pupils must learn to recognize propaganda techniques in the newspaper and in other mass media. They must come to realize that some propaganda is good, some bad. Several devices of propaganda should be familiar to eleventh-grade pupils, among them "name calling," "glittering generalities," and "half-truths." Legitimate use of these devices should be found only on the editorial page, where opinions rightly belong. Better papers strive to be objective in their reporting, but not all pupils read the better papers.

Education for good citizenship will include a recognition and an analysis of propaganda devices.

*How Should the Newspaper Be Used?*

Classroom discussion in conjunction with the reading of the newspaper should be made worth while. For best results, it should be planned and guided with a specific aim in mind. Each lesson should be limited to one area or one topic to prevent random, unmotivated discussion. (A five-minute "free" reading of the paper should precede each lesson.) A lesson limited to "world news" or "editorial comment on the news" is effective. Beware of a mere silent reading of the paper, followed by a testing program.

The newspaper may be used to obtain much useful information, but it can also be used to motivate, to arouse enthusiasms, to help the pupil think for himself—to ask "why?" Here is an opportunity to build intelligent citizenship—a base for finer democracy.

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## Pick on the English Teacher

By KENNETH A. STEWART

"ENGLISH" ENCOMPASSES so many areas of learning that it can almost be said that the study of English is the study of life itself. The proper consideration of "English" includes practically all other subjects offered in the American high school of today. Certainly, if this interpretation is pushed far enough, all other subjects are evaluated, recorded, and even promulgated on the strength of the students' understanding of "English." So, if "English" must pay the piper, it should at least be invited to the dance.

An English teacher is like the littlest of the Three Bears—always getting picked on. It's no fun finding your porridge eaten, your bed slept in, and your best efforts dismissed with a "My gosh, what do they teach in English classes nowadays?"

The area of English which seems to sting the critical eye of writers on the subject is that area generally regarded as "communication skills." The communication skills encompass oral and written expression; unfortunately for all Us Bears, the real bone of contention is written composition. To rephrase the proposition, many critics are not so concerned with the thinking involved in solving problems as they are in the precision and assiduousness with which that solution is expressed. In short, there is less interest shown in how a student arrives at four being the sum of two and two than there is in the penmanship and punctuation employed in writing down the answer, "four." Similarly, when Johnny is asked to write a 500-word theme on "Why Sin Is Bad," he is confronted with the mon-

umental task of avoiding split infinitives, dangling participles, de-gerunded phrases, and fragment run-ons instead of proposing a few decent observations of his own. A fragmented sentence might really be an elliptical gem were Johnny writing for 50 cents a word in some scholarly magazine. At any rate Johnny might express a thought—even if it is fragmented. But the language sniper makes the rules and poor Johnny doesn't; fragmented thoughts are outlawed. (Oh, say how many citizens in our star-spangled land have fragmented thoughts of dangling modifiers?) To the professional sniper this is the happy hunting ground; he must alert an educationally unstable public to the laxness that is rampant in the English profession. The die is cast, but no one seems aware that throwing a seven with only one die is exceedingly difficult.

Unfortunately for Us Bears, the communication skills are so easily measured by insensible standards that total escape from a certain responsibility is impossible. This is the penalty English teachers pay for teaching so many Americans to read and write—the thing necessarily reproduces itself. From a nation of writers we have climbed the ladder of literacy to become a nation of writers who judge other writers. Quite often, it has been suggested, this agitation is nurtured by critics who have not looked beyond their otherwise barren pens since the advent of compulsory education.

Practically anyone can pick up thirty high-school compositions and find at least one bucketful of so-called "errors." Oddly, many of these errors are of modest proportions; less is noted of "ideas" or "thinking" because such ethereal things are harder to evaluate. Here we would have the task of "one mind judging another" rather than the relatively simple "one writer judging another." Besides, there seems at this point to enter another factor—that of intelligence. All good Americans know that all Good Americans do not possess the same mental

horsepower. Especially is this considered when we are one of the good Americans who does have an abundance of horsepower and even, in some cases, the container in which it was shipped. So, we are anxious not to offend anyone's latest I.Q. scores because this violates certain Good American practices, but we are well within our rights to expect all Good Americans to write with equal facility down to and including the dastardly participial phrase.

Well! Then what *do* Us Bears teach in English nowadays?

The answer to that question is not easy to come by. One would certainly think that something should show for such a long time spent in the hallowed halls of learning. And it just might if critics would raise their sights from little old bears to big old elephants.

To say that mechanical skills reflect or portray the quality of thinking behind them is not only erroneous but nefarious. But it is deceptive, especially to the critic with pre-Civil War tendencies. Such conclusions are erroneous as concluding that the connoisseur of good food must be able to cook it in order really to enjoy it. It is heresy to propose that some people can cook food but not enjoy eating it, or that some people can enjoy eating food but not know even on what page the recipe appears. And so it is with English; some people do not and cannot learn to express themselves with facility. So it is with groceries, English, or bears. A good hunter of bear may not know how to prepare bear steaks, but that does not disqualify him as a sniper of bear.

Expecting perfection in composition by a high-school student is expecting the impossible in many cases. The degree with which a critic meets success depends upon the heights of his sights. The public does not expect the average high-school graduate to be proficient as a truck driver, office worker, criminologist, or engineer, but for some reason it does expect him to be a pro-

ficient language mechanic by virtue of some twelve years of dribbling education. It is forgotten that at the end of twelve years of formal education there is a ceremony called "commencement," which indicates that the student is not a practicing citizen but merely on the threshold of beginning to be a practicing citizen.

And so it is with communication skills: a high-school senior has not learned his trade but has merely gathered several tools with which to enter this critical world. If we do not expect a graduating senior to be an excellent chef merely because of his intake of food over the past number of years, perhaps we should not expect too much of his English communication skills for similar reasons.

Running the course of English is like running the course of a 100-yard dash: everyone can run it, but not in equal time. Regardless of excellent coaching, diligent training, and supreme motivation some people will never run 100 yards in ten

seconds; some people will never use communication skills according to the standards set as "legal" by bear snipers hunting with blank cartridges.

It would seem that all the good citizens in our fair land could be classified into one of three categories, Englishly speaking: (1) that group of Good Americans labeled "nonparticipants," who do not or cannot see the value of English or of many other things; (2) the fortunate group of "idea men" who are not concerned with the technicalities of communication as such; (3) that specialized group of language technicians who are experts in the field of split infinitives and noun substantives.

The "nonparticipant" is concerned mainly with the rudiments of the sporting green and the cashing of checks; the "idea man" thinks of the whole problem as so much nonsense; the "language technician" is appalled by this greatest of all catastrophes since Hannibal lost some elephants in the Alps.



## Discipline Is Basic

Our schools must realize that life in our contemporary society demands that our youth be trained to recognize, accept, and live within a framework of authority. At the same time they must provide experiences for youth in the democratic processes. However, democratic experiences must be guided by a competent teacher.

It should be recognized that students are in the process of maturing and experiencing and have not reached the level of maturity nor had the quantity of experiences necessary to be entrusted with complete responsibility in planning activities and making decisions.

There are areas in school life where students should be restricted from planning and responsibility. Fundamental areas of instruction or curricu-

lum must necessarily be the responsibility of professionally trained personnel.

To permit, foster and encourage our youth to plan and participate in school activities in a laissez-faire fashion is a misrepresentation of democracy, a detraction from the reality of democracy, a negation of the fact of mental and social maturation, and an abuse of the individual's opportunity to learn proper habits, attitudes, and democratic skills.

Our schools have the obligation to train students for life in a democratic society, but they must be trained within a framework of authority and in relationship to the democratic realities of life as they exist in the home, church, community and government.—R. L. GIESIGE in the *Ohio Schools*.

# TV Set in the Classroom

By GEORGE H. MILLIS

"DO WE HAVE TO HAVE that television set in our classroom, Mr. Millis?"

"Honestly, I would rather have a regular teacher because the television lessons are so boring."

Thus did my class of seventh graders react when they returned from their class in physical education one September afternoon to find a television set in our room. I was somewhat taken aback because I had expected no such reaction as this. I had viewed some of the lessons and had found them absorbing and, to my way of thinking, well planned and well presented. I was looking forward to using the lessons in seventh-grade mathematics because I thought the instructor a competent, personable young man who was attempting to develop an understanding of mathematical concepts rather than merely teaching pupils to compute mechanically.

It was true that my pupils in this eastern community with its well-developed and functioning educational television station had had more contact with educational tele-

vision programs than I had. I had come from a western university, where educational television was still in a "being-talked-about" state. I was interested in teaching in a particular school in the system because I had learned that this school was one that was not afraid to try out new ideas and was staffed by a forward-looking principal and an alert group of teachers. The school was trying out ability grouping by classes and also was participating in a foundation-sponsored program whereby social studies was being taught by television to fifth and sixth graders in groups of 150 at a time. While I was not to be directly involved in this latter program, it did seem to indicate that the school was carrying on interesting and possibly worth-while projects.

My class was one of advanced seventh graders. The 120 seventh-grade pupils in the school had been divided in four groups on the basis of intelligence scores and achievement, and I had been assigned the more advanced group of thirty-five pupils.

In spite of the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the pupils, we began to participate in the televised mathematics program. As the lessons progressed, it became apparent that despite the competence of the instructor and the thorough planning of the lessons, television as a medium had certain inherent limitations that made it unsuitable for the class I was teaching.

Some of these limitations as I saw them were these:

(1) Unlike other audio-visual teaching devices, television lessons must be followed in sequence and the teacher and class adapt their program to the lessons rather than the reverse. If the teacher were teaching his own class, without benefit of televised lessons, and wished to show a 16-mm. film to his class, he would find one that supple-

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*The story of how this manuscript came to be written intrigued us. On leave from his assignment as assistant professor of education at Montana State University, Missoula, last year, the author took a four-month position as teacher of a seventh grade in a Florida public school. This article describes his impressions of one phase of his experience as a teacher. Regardless of your opinion of the point of view expressed in the article, we can agree that college professors may be able to do a better job of teaching when they occasionally do actual classroom teaching in a public school.*

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mented and extended the work in which the pupils were engaged. If he were doing his job properly, he would key the film to the lesson and discuss it with the pupils. Of course, the same must be done for the televised lesson. The teacher must follow up each television lesson with a discussion of the salient points and with additional assignments to help clinch these points. There is a significant and fundamental difference, however. The television lessons reverse the traditional procedure as set forth above. The lesson plan and concepts are introduced by the television set, and the classroom teacher becomes supplemental to the teaching aid. There may be some who think this is a good thing. I do not. It seems to take a good bit of the fun out of teaching. The teacher's opportunities to be creative are materially decreased, and he is reduced more and more to the status of a nut tightener on the educational assembly line.

(2) The televised lessons have (or had as I observed them) the major limitation of failing to provide for individual differences. Ideally, the television teacher may be an excellent teacher, well versed in his subject and his knowledge of teaching methods. He may have access to many more teaching aids than might be available to the classroom teacher. In spite of this, he is limited by his medium to making a single presentation at one level of difficulty to the many pupils who may be tuned in. He cannot sense which pupils are grasping what he has to say and which are not. He cannot direct a thought-provoking question in the direction of some pupil who may not quite have grasped the concept or principle being presented. He cannot stop to permit someone to ask a question. He finds it difficult, if not impossible, to vary his presentation in depth and scope to make provisions for levels of ability among his viewing audience. Therefore, if the class is one that is being presented for a particular grade level or subject area, he must inevitably tailor his presentation for the average pupil in his

viewing audience and hope that through the brilliance of his performance and the variety of teaching aids he has at his finger tips he will somehow challenge the bright and also inform the dull. This is a feat a master teacher working within a single classroom with but one group of children would find impossible if his teaching method were confined to lecturing to the group.

No television teacher expects to carry the total burden of teaching any subject or lesson on his own shoulders. Follow-up teaching of each lesson by the classroom teacher is expected, and during this follow-up lesson the teacher can and should provide for differences in understanding. The television lesson has been pitched at one level; therefore the room teacher should see to it that the class works in ability groups, after the television lesson, in a manner similar to that suggested by Charlotte Junge.

However in arithmetic, the learning is carried on in an "even front." All pupils in class work on the same area or concept but distinct provision is made for different levels of work in the area. . . . For example, a fifth grade class might all be working on the addition of *like fractions*. Some of the children in the group will be working with manipulative materials under the guidance of the teacher. A second group will be working more or less independently using manipulative materials but also recording solutions abstractly. A third group of able learners will be working independently, solving problems involving the understanding and finding ways of proving the truth of their solutions. All children are working on developing an understanding of the same concept, but the able child is working at a level which challenges his thinking.\*

If the teacher is going to have to do all of this anyway, one might well wonder if he might not be able to provide better motivation and maintain more class interest if he taught the lesson from the beginning without benefit of television.

(3) The television lessons provide no contact between teacher and pupils. Since this

\* Charlotte Junge, "The Gifted Ones—How Shall We Know Them?" *Arithmetic Teacher*, IV (October, 1957), p. 145.

is so, the lessons must of necessity lean heavily on a lecture-demonstration technique. The teacher who teaches without benefit of television can direct a pertinent question to the class or to individuals to help the students think through and better understand the lesson. He can mix lecture, demonstration, discussion, and project work at will. He can speed up the pace of the lesson if he finds it is too slow. He can slow it down if he senses pupils are not keeping up. The television teacher can do none of these things. If a class finds the pace of the television lesson slow, they quickly become bored and they can do nothing about it. They must sit the lesson through to the end even though they grasp the ideas at once.

The bright must sit and wait while time is allowed for pupils of lesser aptitude to work sample problems that the bright have finished working by the time the instructor had finished writing them. On the other hand, their slower fellows, forced to follow the same lesson, have not had enough illustrations presented to grasp fully the concept and have not had enough time to work the sample problems.

Television undoubtedly is an excellent educational medium with many possibilities for the classroom. As yet, it has not been able to offer much help to teachers in overcoming one of their greatest problems, that of providing for individual differences among the pupils in their classes.

## Prestige Alone?

By DONALD C. CHAPUT

Pontiac, Michigan

Recent educational publications concerned with junior-high-school problems have concentrated their fire on an obvious deficiency—there is little or no preparation specifically designed for junior-high teachers. This thought is usually followed by the phrase: "Beginning junior-high teachers do not think of themselves as in a permanent situation, but regard their assignment as merely a prelude to or training ground for a more desirable high-school position. Most of them have been employed with the understanding that 'as soon as something opens up we'll find you a spot in the senior high school.'"

This is probably true. However, I do question the motives usually advanced as to why junior-high teachers wish to move on to senior-high teaching.

The usual reason given is that of *prestige*. It is said that junior-high teachers feel that a position on a high-school faculty would be more respected, both in educational circles and in the community. Certainly, this type of reasoning has its disciples. However, I should like to submit some motives that I feel have so far either been avoided or simply been given inadequate attention.

(a) *Subject matter*. Most new junior-high teachers have recently completed their studies. To them, for example, geography means concepts related to re-

sources, man, location, politics, war, and so on. In junior-high geography, they usually have to be content knowing that the majority of the students finally are able to distinguish between the country France and the city Paris. To new college graduates, this is too far removed from their recent studies. They seek positions in high schools, hoping to deal with minds that are prepared to study subject matter more fully than those in junior high.

(b) *Vocabulary*. This is closely related to subject matter. Recent college graduates going into junior-high teaching face a tremendous usage transition. Former conversational contact with professors, graduate students, and other college students has now been replaced by constant conversation with thirteen-year-old Billy or Mary. These young junior-high teachers often wish for a senior-high position in the hope of once more using a more expressive, accurate vocabulary than is possible at the junior-high level.

Few would deny that a prestige difference exists between junior-high and senior-high teaching. However, I do believe more consideration should also be given to the desire of the new junior-high teacher to come a little closer to his subject matter, and to be able to approach it with an adult vocabulary.

# Is Your Follow-up Showing?

By JAMES B. PETERS

RIDING TO SCHOOL ONE MORNING, a fellow teacher and I noticed a recent graduate pumping gasoline at a filling station. He was dressed in the traditional garb of a major oil company. Reflecting on his school days, we remembered him as a good student and athlete. The question then came into my mind, "How did this graduate get so far afield from the curriculum he followed in high school?" He had followed the college preparatory course and had expected to go on to higher education. If this change of goal was true for him, how many others would we find so far removed from their high-school curriculum? With this idea in mind, we tried to throw some life into the follow-up function and have it show us something we could pass on to our school staff.

We used two categories in our study: The present vocational areas of our graduates

were either *related* or *nonrelated* to their field of preparation. We did not attempt to determine whether their preparation had been of some help to them in their present vocations but simply whether their vocations were related to the curriculums they had pursued in high school. Certainly the boy at the gas pump was in a nonrelated area when he was compared to the vocational home-economics graduate now making a home for herself and family.

Since I knew of no follow-up study along these lines and since the idea interested me, I tried to kill two birds with one follow-up: We used the graduates of 1956, 1957, and 1958, who numbered 237. We received 136 replies, making it a 57.3 percentage of returns. Our introduction was simple. A letter of explanation and a self-addressed post card made up the enclosures. A breakdown of our finding is shown in Table 1.

TABLE I

	Related	Non-related
College prep. returns	49	26
Commercial returns	42	24
General course returns	18	16
Vocational agriculture returns	17	10
Vocational home economics returns	10	10

These results proved both interesting and revealing to us. We tend to base success today on the curriculums that point to higher education. In our case the lowest percentage of correlation was found to be that very curriculum, the college preparatory—at 53 per cent. Next to that was the commercial curriculum at a 57.1 per cent. If these results are as important as we think they are, then let's stop kidding ourselves and really screen those students who are in curriculums pointing to higher education or train-

## EDITOR'S NOTE

*The author is guidance counselor in the Western Area Joint High School at Mifflinburg, Pennsylvania. We think that he has written a human-interest story about students whose life curriculum happens to be at variance with their high-school curriculum. Of course, this happens in the best of schools. We once knew of a boy who was graduated at the head of his class in the technical course and some years later turned up as one of the head accountants with a large automobile manufacturer. He had what we regarded as adequate guidance service and he said it helped him. Even so, he lasted only a few years as a technician—and then became an accountant. Now, if a great many students followed this pattern, some analysis of follow-up might be in order.*

ing. The commercial graduate who has nursed along a 72.01 average is not going to end up in a private secretary's office. Neither is the college preparatory student with a 74.03 average going to be a college freshman with today's pretesting and cutoff procedures.

The one surprising fact in our study was the vocational agriculture percentage of 58.8. This has been a strong program for this area, and the low percentage of correlation isn't because interest is waning. Many of our agriculture graduates want to leave the area for work, thus gravitating to a nonrelated field.

Another tendency in our age of Sputnik is to relate our school success in terms of the number of students going on to higher education and training. Certainly the two highest areas of related vocations—the gen-

eral course at 88.8 per cent and vocational home economics at 100 per cent—speak for the terminal curriculums. These are basic areas for those students not having the ability or financial means to continue their training. Let's not forget the student who wants to become part of our labor economy and also make a success of life.

This study was presented to our faculty through a guidance bulletin. Many of them admitted the very same fact—that the normal association of successes beyond high school is connected with certain curriculums. The intensifying of curriculum for all students seems to be in order. Not to do this for those on terminal education courses is shortchanging our most successful curriculum-related graduates.

Is your follow-up showing you more than figures in a table?

## They Also Serve!

By RICHARD W. PERKINS

LaMesa, California

Although we can't tell by the publicity these days, there are other teachers in the school system besides those who teach mathematics and science. Have we decided in America that only guns and rocket ships are important?

Many countries of the world place a big premium on the training of diplomats and civil service employees. Our great country is sadly lacking in a training system for these people. A program of this type would most certainly include philosophy, psychology, English, speech, literature, history of the world, and the other social sciences.

Everywhere we turn in education we find special fellowships, institutes, government grants, industrial grants for teachers of science and mathematics. But look carefully—do you see any for English teachers, reading teachers, teachers of history, psychologists or

teachers of literature? Are we allowing the race for a little real estate on the moon to cause us to lose sight of the human being and his worth to society as a good citizen?

The author has searched diligently through shelves of publications and has come to the conclusion that one of two things has happened in American education: Either all teachers of subjects except science and mathematics have done such an excellent job that no help is needed, or those subject fields are no longer necessary parts of our educational scheme.

It would seem that these facts should merit some consideration by our educational and congressional leaders, lest America become a country of robots instead of human beings!

They also serve!

# CAPITAL PUNISHMENT— *Pro and Con*

By  
HAROLD H. PUNKE

IN RECENT DECADES several changes have appeared in penal codes and practices, and opinions differ on whether any offense warrants capital punishment. Some people oppose such punishment on religious grounds, and cite the commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." These persons hold that the commandment includes taking life as punishment for crime. Does capital punishment reflect a primitive revenge complex, which retards the development of a system of human relationships needed in a populous industrial democracy? If social conditions produce criminals, as is often maintained, should both criminal and society share blame for crime? Should rehabilitation of offenders be emphasized—with humanitarian consideration for personal worth, and economic consideration for future productivity?

But the weight of history supports punishment which exacts "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," and persons who have not learned the abstractions of demo-

cratic theory or "enlightened ethics" can understand the simple "balance of justice" which such punishment embodies. Every nation consists largely of persons with this level of understanding. Also, may capital punishment be supported as a deterrent to crime?

The philosophy relied on by proponents and by opponents of capital punishment has greater long-range implications than the action of law-enforcement agencies at a particular time. Hence some aspects of the philosophy are examined here.

## *Religious Background and Individual Worth*

Much is said about the importance of Christian teaching in emphasizing individual worth and dignity, and about the place of this emphasis in American democracy. Part of the teaching antedates Jesus. To sense the implications of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," in the cultural background from which early Christianity took form, that commandment should be viewed along with other commandments—as these guides to conduct were impressed upon the Jewish people through Moses in the exodus from Egypt.

Verses 1 to 11, Exodus 20, deal with man's relation to a "jealous God"—"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage"; "Thou shalt have no other gods before me"; no graven images; and so on. Verses 12 to 17 deal with man's relation to man—and concern killing, adultery, stealing, false witness, and covetousness. Verses 18 to 26 again deal essentially with man's relation to God—including at-

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Ordinarily, The Clearing House does not publish articles of general interest apart from teaching or administration. However, so much public attention has been centered on capital punishment since the recent California case that our editorial board considered the topic a vital one for teacher and student study. The author, who is professor of education, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama, has presented what we might call the democratic dilemma arising out of the conflict between the individual and the society he belongs to.*

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tention to Moses as intermediary. Deuteronomy 4:2 warns against adding to or diminishing the commandments, and admonishes that the commandments be kept.

When the Pharisee inquired, some centuries later:

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

(Matthew 22:36-40)

Thus the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," is a bare skeletal statement sandwiched among others. To the extent to which elaboration is an index, there seemed to be less concern about whether man killed fellowman than about man's relation to his new and jealous God.

So, as the commandment comes to posterity through Moses, it hardly constitutes a major basis for emphasis on individual human worth—as worth is conceived in American philosophy.

By contrast, extensive portions of Jesus' teachings emphasize individual significance and worth as set forth in the Golden Rule, or as set forth elsewhere with particular reference to children, the lowly, the meek and downtrodden, or those who are burdened and heavy laden (Matthew 11:28 ff.). Jesus' solicitude did not emphasize concern for the powerful and mighty—persons with government authority or with material control over others. Thus: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:25). Or again: "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God," and "But woe unto you that are rich" (Luke 6:20 ff.).

Jesus had great concern for average persons—the common man and his children.

### *The Individual in Western Socio-economic Developments*

Several developments affect the status of the individual in Western democracies. The Lutheran Reformation is one. By urging that each person learn to read and interpret the Bible for himself, without a priest as intermediary, Luther raised the dignity and self-respect of the individual and increased consideration for the lowly. His influence in developing universal public education can be exaggerated, but the goal of universal literacy and widespread understanding of the Scriptures offered a focus for religious reformers—and for others striving to improve the well-being of common people.

The individualized outlook of the Reformation, with subsequent Protestant splintering, was strengthened by the growth of towns in Western Europe—and by the development of a *laissez-faire* economy which offered rich material rewards for the ambitious, adventuresome, insightful, and ruthless. *Laissez-faire* economics, before the rise of modern corporations, emphasized "each person standing on his own" in private competition—much as each stood on his own in the religious emphasis of Luther.

The development of North America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mainly under English and French influence, reflected contemporary religious and economic trends of western Europe. After French influence was largely eliminated from America, and after the English colonies became politically independent, the frontier for several decades was important in shaping American culture. Frontier life emphasized the status and competence of the individual—his freedom from control by others, as well as freedom from or denial of help that close neighbors might give. For several decades the American frontier attracted many northwest Europeans—who had a spirit of independence and self-confidence, although little accumulated wealth or prestige. The frontier likewise offered

freedom from "older" parts of this country—for those who had not done well in their initial new-world struggle for wealth or status. Escape to the frontier retarded the rate of social stratification and "fossilization" in older parts of the nation, and thus helped perpetuate and expand a philosophy which emphasizes the individual.

The frontier escape contributed to the well-being of the common man through keeping labor scarce in older regions. Two results are noted: relatively high wages in comparison with Europe, and the development of technology and invention with respect to labor-saving devices. Our present drive for scientific research and technology gained early stimulus from the pioneer urge for great material production from a small labor supply. The urge still helps propel the drive—although clouded by a shift from competition among individuals to competition among corporate networks, overlaid by governmental participation and tax concessions.

One area of research deserves special note regarding individual status and dignity in America—research in psychology, sociology, and education concerning the nature of intelligence and the influence which education and other social conditions have in developing human capacities. Research which shows that functional intelligence is largely an outgrowth of previous learning and development, or which shows that delinquency is largely a product of social conditions, enhances individual status by noting the capacity of the "meek and the lowly" to become productive or leading citizens if given appropriate opportunity. Such research also does much to modify enslavement to "an aristocracy of genes"—to modify the idea that intellectual capacities are in the main biologically determined.

So, in the last few centuries several forces have helped to improve the status of the individual—helped to dignify his life and to increase the respect which government, church, school, and home must extend him.

#### *Consistency in Regard for Human Worth*

Our attitude toward major crimes against persons, and toward capital punishment and other penalties against the body, reflects one area of American concern for individual dignity and status. This concern seems inconsistent with our attitudes and behavior in some other respects. The "other respects" include deaths caused by war—because we drift and lack concern for timely preventive measures; deaths from industrial accidents—that could be avoided by the application of known precautions; part of the loss of life through traffic accidents; thousands of deaths each year from preventable disease—because of personal carelessness, combined with social inability to organize our health and medical knowledge; and many childhood deaths from accidents—which we have the knowledge to prevent. Are we then straining at a gnat if we become disturbed about the few persons claimed through capital punishment?

Inconsistency and lack of perspective result largely from inadequate understanding of a complex society. If a man shoots a neighbor, one needs no great understanding of social structure to see a simple cause-effect relationship. The same is true where an executioner exacts the death penalty. Such a case involves certainty of outcome, and each person can picture himself "in the shoes of the condemned." But the statistical probability of untimely death through war, accident, or preventable disease cannot be "pictured" without formal training. "Chance" makes it possible for each individual to think that he personally will not be hit; there is no sense of certainty such as accompanies a condemned person facing the gallows. Many people seem to enjoy taking a "sporting chance with fate."

In the near future average Americans are not likely to become disturbed about the statistical probability of their being killed through one of the preventable avenues suggested, except spasmodically as a close

friend dies in this way, any more than the average American becomes disturbed about the probability of his becoming a patient in a mental hospital. Until the average person understands complex social relationships, and the probability of untimely death to him through some preventable avenue, it is likely that Americans as a people will continue to become disturbed by scattered instances of life taken in punishment for crime but jog along with substantial indifference to the great killers of our time.

#### *Responsibility in Making and Upholding the Law*

Any organized group must have governing regulations. Relationships among nations must likewise be governed by regulations. Even war is supposed to stay within crude bounds. Western democracy presumes that each mature citizen may participate in making the laws. One who dislikes a legislative proposal has an avenue of protest. After legislation is enacted, it is intended to govern all members of the group—whether they favored or opposed it—until it is modified. Legal machinery in America operates about as indicated.

That machinery embodies the key idea of rule by law, in contrast with personal rule by a head of state. Where rule by law prevails, the law is presumed to reflect the pooled judgments of intelligent and unimpassioned representatives of all mature citizens. Judges who interpret the law are likewise supposed to be free from passion and prejudice.

It was to protect the individual from arbitrary dictators "that laws were instituted among men." It follows that any body of people who accept the idea of rule by law, rather than by personal dictate, must support the laws which the group enacts—until the laws are modified through accepted lawmaking procedure. Socrates recognized this point when his own life was at stake—more clearly than many subsequent exponents of democracy have recognized it.

The foregoing comment applies to legislative provision for capital punishment. A society which typically made or changed regulations governing specific cases, after the cases arose, could never have a just or stable government. Such a society would be ruled by the propaganda and passions of the moment—which seldom improve the long-range well-being of the people. Under "rule by law," the only argument when a case arises is whether the law is fairly administered—a fair trial. But there can be extended argument regarding such trial. Rule by law in a democracy does not mean that the law will be less severe on offenders than under a dictator, but that each has a voice in making the law—in deciding beforehand upon the penalties.

#### *International Leadership and Domestic Practice*

When a nation has world prominence, some of its laws assume international importance. World prominence places its social structure and activities in world limelight. Failure to arraign offenders in some cases, or extended trials in others, may provide focal points of attack on its institutions and ideals—used by its enemies and competitors. Some American cases involving race relationships illustrate the point, as do some spy cases. Congressional investigations may have similar effects. We should be cognizant of our using comparable focal points in attacking others.

Although a nation which claims to "rule by law" occupies international limelight, it must apply its domestic law as fairly and justly as possible. If highly organized sentiment can be substituted for law in particular cases, one's rights, duties, and liberties under the law are undermined. Impassioned mobs, unable to see beyond a particular instance to a general rule, never contribute much to developing a civilization based on law. Passion has done little to develop the machinery of justice. If there is great popular objection to a law, it

should be promptly modified through *established channels*—not ignored. Until international law provides otherwise, nations will assign different penalties for particular offenses. If a nation experiences international criticism because of its code, the remedy does not lie in surrender to sentimentality and innuendo, but in examining its social and legal structure.

If the foregoing logic is sound, there should be little place for a top-flight official—president or governor—to pardon convicted offenders after the highest tribunal within the jurisdiction concerned has adjudicated the case under the laws worked out by the people—including the convicted. The fact that a president or governor dislikes a particular law should be irrelevant. Yet it is difficult for a people which places great emphasis on individual worth and dignity to concede that its legislative and judicial procedures are free from

error. Perhaps the pardon matter boils down to judicious use versus abuse. But since it places great power in the hands of one person, free citizens under law must be alert that such one-man authority does not get beyond their retraction.

Consistency between what a nation advocates internationally and what it practices domestically is important when that nation acts extensively in the international spotlight. When a culture is increasingly dynamic, domestically and internationally, consistency assumes two main features: One concerns the scope of activities to which consistency relates; the other concerns effort to maintain or improve consistency in the face of many rather independent variables. International responsibility for leadership through uncoerced persuasion makes consistency between what Americans advocate and what they practice more important than it used to be.



## For the More Able Students

In order to provide for the top group of more able students at Hoover Junior High School [Oakland, California] a special pre-period class was established. On the basis of the data collected during the initial year of the program, the following results were observed:

1. The top group of more able students can successfully be challenged by the creation of additional educational opportunities of an enrichment nature. Marked growth in basic skills as well as critical thinking was noted when comparing test results after "exposure" to this class. The newly stimulated desire for knowledge also carried over to the regular subjects taken by these students.

2. Curriculum planning and in-service training are at their "peak" during a program such as this. Faced with no set curriculum or textbooks, teachers—both traditional and new—are more creative in their efforts.

3. Programs for the more able student if properly

"launched" will have continued cooperation and support from all those involved. The key is *involvement* of all from the planning stages of the program.

4. Student attendance was on a regular basis and student reactions ranged from "stimulating and interesting" to "opening up new doors."

5. By cutting across grade levels some students were presented with material ordinarily not presented until a later grade.

6. Plans have been made for the continuance of the special pre-period class for the coming school year with a continuous program of evaluation.

7. As a result of the experiment the scope of the regular school program has been increased. Two new classes have been established—an art and an industrial arts class meeting within the regular school day, cutting across grade levels, and drawing the more able, talented students in those areas.—*JACK M. CAPRI and NORMAN SHAPIRO in the California Journal of Secondary Education.*

# HIGH-SCHOOL DRAMATICS: Must It Be Inferior?

By GREGORY A. FALLS

TOO MANY HIGH-SCHOOL DRAMATICS PROGRAMS are so far removed from teaching literature that it is a wonder that the dramatics program and the senior English course are both housed under the same roof. I am referring to the unfortunate, misguided selection of "proper plays" for high-school students to perform. It is perfectly common for a student to come from a last period English class, in which he is studying *Macbeth*, to a rehearsal of the class play that is the worst sort of hack writing. We well know that thousands of high schools are annually training their students in art and literature by either casting them in, or performing for them, some of the poorest, most tasteless plays ever written.

The standard argument for such a policy is threefold: (1) These "high school plays" are all the students are capable of doing. (2) This is what the public wants. (3) The school can afford to do only nonroyalty plays. Let us examine these three alibis—

and alibis they are—for not teaching what we should by rights be teaching.

The argument that "high-school plays are all the students are capable of doing" almost refutes itself. Our students are capable of reading the great masters of literature and understanding something of what they read, yet all they are capable of understanding for performance is "Johnny Pumpkin's Mad Courtship" or other such trash. At every turn we can see this point refuted. High-school students see adult movies and TV plays, read adult books, get married, raise families, discuss political, religious, and philosophic concepts, but are not capable of even the simplest adult dramatic literature! Rather we must provide some simple, innocuous farce for them to do. A look at the current production schedule of high schools all over the country, in such listings as are found in *Players Magazine*, will more than prove that high-school students in some places are producing and seeing intelligent, mature, adult plays. Do the other high schools wish to admit that schools in many other places have such vastly superior students, both for performing and viewing?

Let no one misunderstand me. I do not mean that the high schools should now all leap into production of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* or Racine's *Phèdre*. My point is that schools can justify their choice of plays only on the basis of mature, adult literature. Since we are training adolescents for adult responsibilities by introducing them into the confusing and complex world of adults, we must ask ourselves: Is this play literature? Is it adult? Does this play have any pretenses at art, or was it written by some sweet old lady in East Horseshoe, who just loves to write innocent, adolescent plays? My

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*The answer given by the author is, of course, no. But in the process of replying negatively to the question, he has some sharp remarks on the purposes for having school dramatics programs and realistic goals for high-school plays. Part of this article was included in a paper prepared for the fifth Yale Conference on the Teaching of English. But the paper was unpublished; therefore, we are happy to report on it here. The author is associate professor of speech and director of drama at the University of Vermont, Burlington, and founder-director of the Champlain Shakespeare Festival.*

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rule-of-thumb criterion is that no play should be performed in a high school that would not at least be accepted for reading and discussion in a contemporary literature course. Or, to put it more specifically, I seriously question the artistic and literary qualities of any contemporary plays that have not been subjected to the severe critical test of professional production and criticism. Would you not demand at least that much of the plays taught in your literature courses? If so, then please no double standards!

The second argument for doing inferior plays is that "this is the only kind of thing our audiences want." This argument immediately raises the question: For whom are the plays being done in an educational institution? Is the dramatics program primarily obligated to entertain the theater-going community, or is it obligated to teach art and literature to students? Certainly my vote goes with education before entertainment, with the student, not the public.

But even taking this argument at face value, it is fallacious. The poor "high-school-type play" is grossly inferior to the movies and TV plays which this same adult audience patronizes and apparently relishes. Furthermore, as many high-school dramatics directors have happily discovered, once a good play has been done successfully, the local audience is never again so receptive to hack high-school plays. The captive audience member at most high-school productions always presets his standards low, because he feels he must. He is happy to watch *his children* perform in any piece of tripe! And, finally, we can honestly admit that the audience of the high-school play is basically a sympathetic one. It comes not because of the play but because it is being done by the school. Considering some of the horrors these people have sat through all these years, their loyalty cannot be questioned; it is noble!

The third argument, that "we can afford only nonroyalty plays," is also specious.

The highest royalty which a play charges today is \$50, and the play lessers commonly reduce prices as much as 50 per cent for schools with small auditoriums and with financial problems. Thus, royalties are in reality only about \$25 to \$35, with second performances proportionately reduced. At \$35 royalty for a performance, it takes only seventy patrons at 50 cents each to meet the cost.

Few contemporary plays of any literary pretensions are available royalty free, although all the great plays of the past are outside the copyright limitations. Since the purpose of high-school dramatics is to teach literature, there can be no justification for the school to capitulate its obligation because of \$25 or \$35 a year for royalty. Usually the reason a school is not able to pay royalties is that it expects to use all the proceeds for something extraneous to dramatics. Since the literary merits of the play produced are of prime importance to the entire dramatics program, the school must first purchase a respectable play, before using play proceeds for band uniforms, trophies, and the like.

One further complaint about the inferior high-school dramatics program: the obsession with contest plays. Many principals, teachers, and students are annually caught in the tradition of the one-act play contest. This endless circle of contest is often a poor motivation for a high-school dramatics program, although in many schools it seems to be the only motivation. The danger (not fault) of play contests is that they are concerned with competing, whereas art and literature, unlike sports, are not basically competitive. We must remember that the purpose of high-school dramatics is to teach art and literature, and if the contests, with their limitations on plays and production procedure, interfere with this valuable purpose, then the contests are damaging to both student and school. One example is the school that expends all its dramatic energy and money on class one-act plays for the

district contest. Since there are precious few one-act plays of any literary pretensions, and since in many schools this spreads the school's acting and directing talent too thinly, such a program tends to lower ap-

preciable the quality of the art they produce. Contests can be valuable but only if they complement or supplement the basic responsibility of the school in teaching art and literature.

## Athletics on the JHS Level

The story begins with the mutual concern of Dr. Ellis Champlin, former director of the health, physical education and recreation division of the State Education Department, and the officials of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association in the conditions under which the boy in grades 7, 8 and 9 was participating in athletics during the 1940's.

In a State where high school athletics are conducted under near-ideal administrative conditions, providing a broad and varied program under desirable statewide controls, little attention had been paid to the junior high school boy. Alarm was expressed over this somewhat chaotic state of affairs, which often found victory as the chief goal, with the safety and education of the youngster relegated to a poor second in importance. In a State where age is carefully controlled at the high school level, no State controls existed for the junior high school boy. This is but one instance of the lack of intelligent control in a program where unequal competition develops only too often.

The special committee appointed by the NYSPHSAA, governing body of the program for more than 700 member schools, was formed in 1951. It found a confusing variance of opinion at the national level, relating to the athletic program for this age group. Out-of-school agencies often conducted extensive programs involving competition well beyond the local district or area, sometimes involving national or near-national championships. Some aspects of these programs were extremely well administered, others were open to serious discussion if the welfare of the youngster was to be the first consideration. Acceptance of a program in sports by the youth of this age level, and their parents, was widespread, yet the schools appeared hesitant to accept a position of leadership, despite the facilities, personnel and financial backing readily available.

State committee philosophy indicates that the emphasis shall be on the playing and the proper teaching and control of players. The contest in itself is a "laboratory" experience. Winning the contest is the immediate goal of every player and team but must be accomplished in an atmosphere of good

sportsmanship, proper game administration and lack of undue outside pressures of any type. Championships at a "league" level are not recommended and all competition should be restricted to the immediate geographical area. The "league" at junior high level exists purely for convenience of scheduling and other administrative procedures. Sectional competition is reserved for the high school athlete.

The committee report has received considerable national acclaim as an outstanding effort to bridge the gap between the elementary program and the senior program. The report provides restrictions which control the overzealous and yet it permits an interesting and challenging program for this age group.

The individual school program is established by local school administrative policy. Schools participating in the interscholastic program should adhere to the recommended standards and so supervise their athletic coaches that maximum program benefits are possible in an atmosphere of teaching and sportsmanship, and any evidence of unduly high-pressured competition is avoided. As in all teaching, the character, intelligence, ideals and morals of the teacher are reflected in the actions of the students. The success of the modified program is dependent on the individual sport coach and his understanding and teaching of the principles of the desired program. Obviously all of the recommended administrative practices must be carried out if a safe and desirable program is to be presented.

The need for conducting an interesting and challenging program of athletics is obvious if our nation is to be strong physically. The State report standards permit a program that encourages the maximum development of each student. The ideal program will provide maximum athletic growth within the structure of the entire junior high school curriculum without handicapping the academic achievements. Properly conducted, neither need suffer at the hands of the other. The committee report challenges every school to conduct a moderate, yet extensive, program between equals, for the maximum benefit of every participating youngster.—KURT BEYER in *New York State Education*.

# What of the Twenty-eight?

By ALLAN A. SIEMERS

"GEORGE GET YOUR FEET OFF THAT DESK!"

"Dolores, for the last time will you stop filing your nails!"

"Richard, if I hear another remark like that you and I will be in the principal's office before you can shut your mouth."

In classroom after classroom throughout the country competent teachers, devoted to their subject area and to the teaching of adolescents, are being forced to make such remarks. Forced because, as Americans dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, we have confused the terms freedom and license with democracy and equality. We are assuming that in the interests of maintaining a democratic state all high-school youth must, at nearly all costs, be allowed to remain in school through grade twelve. We have failed to remember that the founding fathers saw in the concept of "democracy" an equally compelling and complementary concept called "responsibility." Without the latter the former has

little meaning. Without responsibility, a classroom is essentially without equality.

Must we continue to tolerate the student who clearly demonstrates his unwillingness to co-operate, his unwillingness to help promote an atmosphere in which meaningful learning takes place? It is my contention that the time has long since passed when parents, school board members, teachers, and administrators should answer these questions: "Are there not some high school students who by their actions and attitudes demonstrate such contempt for school plant and personnel as to forfeit their privilege of attendance? Shouldn't we be concerned for the twenty-eight students in many American schoolrooms who deserve not the second-class instruction of a teacher harassed by two classroom belligerents, but rather the undivided attention of a teacher who is competent and composed?" The answers are obvious.

This is not to mean that "below average" students should be denied a high-school education; we are not referring to this kind of student. The point is made that *any* student, regardless of intellectual ability, who repeatedly interferes with classroom learning should be barred from further schooling. And what of the "leadership" provided by such a youth? Removal from the classroom lessens the danger of others' emulating his misshapen behavior and similarly "glorying" in the attention he receives.

Isn't it time for us firmly to resolve that an English teacher should have an opportunity to impart difficult concepts of mood and feeling during the study of American literature? Should a biology teacher be forced continually to interrupt discussion because two occupants of his classroom have never realized that it is a privilege to attend high school rather than a right? Are we as

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*No doubt about it, the teachers of this country are greatly concerned over the apparently increasing difficulties they face in classroom control. The group that seems to cause trouble is not only the nonlearners but the unwilling learners. The latter allow their attitudes to get in the way of satisfactory achievement. In effect, it is as if they say to the teacher, "Teach me, I dare you!" This concern over discipline in schools reflects a complex condition in our society for which most people believe that there is no simple remedy. Keep this in mind if you will, as you read this article. The author is director of secondary student teaching, Wisconsin State College, River Falls, Wisconsin.*

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parents and educators going to allow the continued sacrifice of these teachers' services to those twenty-eight young people because we have confused democracy with license?

For the past three years I have been supervising secondary student teachers in California and Wisconsin. Much of this time I devoted to visiting classrooms and talking with teachers and administrators in an effort to promote student teacher-training programs. Again and again the matter of democratic classroom control becomes of concern; it is a factor of major proportion wherever youth of high-school age are brought together for their schooling. "Discipline" continues to be of primary concern for more teachers than the author cares to recount. The ill-bred actions of high-school youth occupy many teaching hours—teaching hours which should and could be devoted to upgrading critical thinking and developing logical thought processes in those youth who recognize the meaning of "responsibility" in a democratic society.

Let us assume that by "education" we mean acquiring desired concepts and relationships, skills, and attitudes. By permitting continually recalcitrant youth to remain in high school, are we educating *them* in a desired direction any more than we are the twenty-eight who sit idly while their history teacher repeatedly disciplines her two special "students"? Isn't the student who is willing to attempt a written assignment about the economic causes of the Civil War being denied this privilege? Why must he and his counterparts be forced to circumvent their schooling because society believes that *all* youth must attend high

school? If American is to prosper, then such growth lies in the hands of the twenty-eight. It is to these youth that our culture must turn for tomorrow's peace and happiness; it is the twenty-eight who must receive the fullest measure of education which the American school system has to offer.

The suggestion that the two irresponsible students be denied high-school attendance brings a sobering thought. If society ever awakens to the potential of the twenty-eight, then the classroom teacher will need to examine his teaching methods and his use of varied and appropriate materials. Given more time to teach his class, he would then be obligated to use as wide a variety of methods and materials as possible; his classes could expect the pinnacle of teaching ability—a fully trained teacher, who is vitally interested in the subject and who is thoroughly aware of what and how to teach.

With the millions of high-school youth who will flood our rooms in this decade will come those who enter only because of state age laws. Others will come because parents insist on their attendance. Fortunately the overwhelming majority will enter gladly, expecting to receive the excellent education which is available in many American schools. Are not these millions correct in their expectations that high-school experiences should be directed toward meaningful understandings, skills, and attitudes? Why then do we remain in our archaic mold and continue to believe that the expulsion of irresponsible youth from public secondary schools is fraught with "inequality" and "undemocratic" overtones?

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When education becomes creative, it is like a drama in which there are no spectators. Now the student assumes a new role; he does not sit passively; rather he feels personally involved in the educative process. His questions have a sense of urgency. When the hour is over, he feels that only a few minutes have passed. The material which has been covered has a personal significance.—FREDERICK MAYER in *CTA Journal*.

# A FAIR GRADING SYSTEM

By MORTON ALPREN

CAN FAIR GRADING and acceptable academic standards survive in our commitment to mass education? These goals have appeared to be at cross purposes because we have not succeeded in facing some of the underlying problems that confront teachers when they rate their pupils.

## *Nature of the Dilemma*

Grading, as a problem, is an ancient one. Even when school functions and purposes were less diverse in our society, it is doubtful that pupils and parents clearly understood what teachers were trying to communicate through marks. In our present educational setup, notable for its desire to provide for all youngsters, the problem has become more complex.

Today's teacher, especially in a secondary school, is faced with a dilemma at report periods. When he raises his pen to record a pupil's grade, he intends to maintain his notion of reasonable academic standards. At the same time he is trying to include in this rating such criteria as effort, attitudes, and achievement in terms of the pupil's potential ability to succeed. Most current

secondary-school report cards do not allow the teacher to achieve such diverse goals successfully. A single grade rating in a subject area leads to the inevitable result of a communication that, at best, is vague to the pupil and parent.

On the other hand, when attempts are made to provide numerous criteria, the result is usually to overburden a teacher, who must rate 150 to 200 pupils, and/or lead the home to pay little heed to anything but the "final" or subject-achievement grade.

Underlying this discussion is the element of subjectivity. Where the single rating criterion is used, all too much is expected of the teacher. We cannot assume that every teacher is consciously aware of his continual wrestle to separate other criteria from the parent's conception of an achievement standard. As a result, a pupil whose actual achievement is near the top of his class but who does not extend himself or who irritates others, will be rated at a level lower than he has a right to expect. The single grade does not allow the teacher to reflect his reactions to the pupil himself. Are we so naïve as to assume that most teachers do not like some pupils more than others—and dislike some more than others? Teachers, while their professional obligations call for objectivity, are human and likely to reflect their feelings in single criterion ratings that purport to reveal an academic performance.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Here are dilemmas: How can a marking system provide needed incentive on the part of students, adequate communication to parents, and at the same time uphold rigorous academic standards? What characteristics should a marking system possess? Is only one mark on the report card sufficient to resolve the perplexing goals underlining the questions listed? The author, associate professor of education, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, makes here an analysis of some of the issues.*

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## *Ramifications of the Problem*

There are at least three negative effects that emanate from the complexity of purposes manifested in the single rating. One is the obvious confusion of muddled communication. The report card that reveals a grade to a pupil and parent cannot be interpreted accurately. (This is a natural result when teachers resolve the dilemma in

different ways.) How can parents discern the extent to which the grade reveals achievement based on generally accepted standards, or the pupil's achievement in terms of his potential ability to succeed, or the manner in which the pupil conducts himself in class?

A second negative effect is more apparent where schools are attempting to group slower and brighter pupils in special classes as a way of meeting their differences in ability and interest. Teachers accustomed to wider ranges of ability in one class are not aided in divorcing other factors from general achievement standards. Many of these teachers do not adjust easily to performance expectations of a special class as opposed to a general population of pupils, and their grades approximate a normal curve distribution. This is unfair to the less able pupil in the brighter class and equally misleading for the brighter one in a slow group.

The results for those who receive lower ratings in special classes of more able students leads to a third negative effect. With colleges becoming more selective due to increasing enrollments, those screened out are in a better position to be highly critical of unfair teacher grades. Why? Because statements from college and College Entrance Board personnel reveal that teacher grades remain one of the highest criteria for college acceptance.

In effect, the single rating for a pupil in a given subject places the teacher in a difficult, time-consuming dilemma. The teacher can exercise much influence upon a pupil's future through each grade. The grade rarely presents a true picture of an accomplishment in terms of generally acceptable academic standards. What can be done about the situation?

#### *An Administrative Solution*

Specific steps are necessary to implement the change in policy which would provide

two ratings for each pupil in each subject. The teacher, for example, would be expected to provide two grades—one for achievement based upon the pupil's performance according to generally accepted standards, and a second which would emphasize effort or achievement based upon the pupil's potential ability to perform up to generally accepted standards. (This idea is not new but is used by a number of elementary schools and a few isolated secondary schools. It was used in many schools with a different format many years ago. However, whereas the first grade might then have been designated by an alphabetical letter, the second usually appeared as a number, which resulted in lessening its importance.)

The two criteria, with similar scales, would allow for more objectivity by the teacher, would be more meaningful to parent, pupil, and college, and need not produce any upheaval in promotional policies. In the long run, teachers should be able to spend less time in recording grades because the emotional factors in the rating dilemma can be more easily resolved.

The school staff that utilizes this idea would have to accept its meaning, as well. If teachers are not made aware of the reason for having both grades in the same form, i.e., alphabetical letters, they may unwittingly sabotage the intent.

It would be important for the entire faculty to examine the purposes of the shift in grading policy.

The newer policy and the reasons for it should be revealed to lay and pupil populations, through newspaper releases, discussions at P.T.A. meetings, and classroom discussions.

Lastly, the meaning and results of the two-grade plan should be revealed to colleges on transcripts. Most colleges are interested in learning about a pupil's effort as well as his actual performance.

# It's Good That Children Differ

By MAXINE H. ROBBINS

FEW TEACHERS ARE UNAWARE of the many levels of ability that exist in every classroom—and of some of the circumstances that create these differences. In spite of this knowledge, education still lags far behind in caring for individual differences.

The United States is one of the few countries in the world that aims at education for all the children of all the people. It is a gross misconception to believe that this can be or ought to be "equal" education. This is unrealistic when we consider the differing abilities of children. It would be wiser to say "the best education for the individual involved." To appraise our schools intelligently, one must understand the many levels of abilities with which each teacher must work. When an average group of six year olds enters school, some will be average four year olds in ability; a few will be aver-

age eight year olds. However, most of the children will fall within a four-year range, minus the few exceptions who are at the above-mentioned extremes. So from the day a child enters school, there are four levels, at least, in his first-grade room and this range excludes extremes.

If these children are tested in other traits, such as aptitude for number work, extent of vocabulary, ability to complete sentences, and aptitude for reading, the same range of ability will be found. If this fact seems disconcerting to the beginning teacher, it will likewise baffle the intermediate grade teacher and the junior-high teacher because research has shown that the better the teaching, the more widely will the abilities be spread as children progress in school. Thus the junior-high teacher finds that he has a child who is reading the fifth-grade book in the same room with one who has just finished *Macbeth*. By the time the eighth grade is reached—if we exclude the extremes—a teacher will have at least eight levels of abilities in a normal group of children. To make this even more confusing, Johnny may have a seventh-grade ability in arithmetic, a fourth-grade vocabulary, a third-grade reading ability, ability to understand and appreciate art that is comparable to a junior in high school, a flair for science that equals the average ninth grader, and all ranges of other abilities besides many emotional problems.

The schools have recognized these problems and have attempted various methods to take care of them. One of the earliest methods was retention. If a child did not read the grade-level book at the end of the year, the answer was easy: retain him in the grade until he had achieved the proper reading ability. This explains why a sixteen year old sat in my second-grade class in a

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Many writers have suggested that we live in an age of conformity. A popular national magazine for years stressed the idea of togetherness. And the educational literature reflects an exceedingly great interest in the group—group guidance, group consciousness, peer culture, street-corner gangs, and so forth. Yet we know that democracy places a premium on the dignity, worth, and potential of the individual. Is there a conflict here? We think not. But there are opposing forces. Our assessment is that the sixties will see a renascence of interest in the individual, and at the same time some tapering off of pressures for conformity. After all, the individual is unique because he may be as different as he is alike. The author is assistant principal of School 69, Indianapolis, Indiana, which includes both elementary and junior-high-school pupils.*

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small Missouri town a few years back. He still couldn't read the second-grade book; and since reading was most often the reason for retention, he was unable to go to the next grade. It mattered not that he told jokes to seven year olds that their parents would have been embarrassed to hear!

Gradually, school systems saw that retention did not solve the problem. It did not make all who went to the next grade equal in ability and able to learn from the same books. This realization did not come easily. Our school systems first tried midyear promotions, believing that a half-year loss would not create the same trouble that an entire year had caused. The differences in abilities still existed; kept increasing in the upper grades and in junior high school. The reason that the high schools once seemed not so greatly affected by vast differences in ability was that the large number of dropouts accounted for the leveling off of abilities in high school.

Another method school systems used to make children more nearly "homogeneous" and easier to teach has been a minimum-essentials type of training. This has been tried less widely than retention but even so some detrimental results might be mentioned. If every child is held to the same standard of work, it can be said that this is unfair to more than half of our children. There are those pupils who cannot possibly achieve with the so-called average. Nor can we say that the average pupil is average in every phase of the work that he does. This means that those children who are capable of doing ninth-grade work in the seventh-grade class are not being challenged to do anything; instead, they are sliding by with no inspiration to do better. Day by day these children—it may be that they are our future leaders—are developing habits of laziness and carelessness. They are constantly bored by doing what they can do already with no effort or study on their part. In the meanwhile, those at the bottom are struggling to meet standards which they

can't meet. The work grows more and more discouraging for them. They learn to hate school and the things that school stands for. They drop out as soon as possible to find something they can do which gives them some measure of satisfaction. There is no minimum program that works for all of our children. If it did, how simple teaching could be! We would no longer need to worry about sufficient teachers; we could hire many suitable people to teach minimum facts. There are no lists of essentials for each child to memorize. Memorizing facts from books has been found to be one of the lowest levels of achievement. To contribute to the future of the United States, we need people who can face and meet many situations and solve the problems which these situations, forever changing, create. No minimum essentials can tell us what new problems may arise tomorrow.

A more recent trend and one that offers more promise for a few children is separation into special classes. The most common special classes are those for "dull" or "below normal" children. Tests indicate that a child with an I.Q. below 70 does best in a group of similar children. Placing children in special classes narrows the range of abilities, but does not eliminate it. Recently I observed a gifted class. Within the gifted group of thirty was one boy who had reached the age of fourteen and still could not write in a legible fashion; yet this same lad could explain in an adult fashion the Einstein theory. I cite this example not to prove that special classes are without merit, but to show that even if one is given an entire group, carefully tested and selected, there will still be many levels of ability within the group. If the extreme cases are taken from the classroom at both ends (and research shows that this idea has merit), the range of ability in the remaining class will still be at least 80 per cent of the variability with which we started.

Organization of the school has much to do with ability to care for individual dif-

ferences of children. Junior high schools have pioneered in the type of organization that uses a "large block of time," with one teacher responsible for the learning activities of a group of children for not less than two or three hours during each day. As compared to the teacher-each-period plan, this one enables one teacher to know each pupil better, to render more effective guidance service, and to organize more meaningful units around community resources. It helps the teacher to know the children's needs, to spend more time with small groups, to recognize and develop leadership ability, and to do a better job in the development of skills.

A second plan of organization, which helps to avoid any teacher's having so many children that she cannot know them well, is called the "little school" plan. Classes are grouped into a school within a school of five or six teachers in the junior high and high school. Every child has all of his classes with this small core of teachers for two to four years. In this plan the pupil is often in a two- or three-hour block of time. Pupils have only three or four different teachers instead of one each period. In the grades below junior high a teacher should seldom be expected to know and guide more than thirty children in a classroom. If we are to raise each child to a reasonably high level of achievement, teachers must have few enough children to accommodate their differences.

Another requirement essential to individual teaching is that of plentiful and widely varied materials to meet the needs and abilities of children. For many years, we have known that the level of reading printed plainly on the back of books causes more damage than good. A child needs to be able to feel free to read, without stigma, that level which he reads best. Within each classroom, a teacher needs materials that fit all the level of abilities which are within her room; in a junior-high class this would normally cover everything from primary

reading to senior high school. School libraries are a necessity; but they cannot take the place of an adequate supply of books, papers, magazines, films, filmstrips, and other materials in every classroom.

Every school needs an adequate testing program. It is important that some type of profile be kept so that the teacher can quickly see what each child has achieved in academic skills in previous years. There should be individual folders for each child where work samples and all other pertinent information are kept. Here also should be the nurse's record and information concerning the child's home and economic condition. Writing samples, creative poems, significant letters from parents, art samples can be filed to show the progress of the child. These records are invaluable to a busy teacher who hasn't the time to search out the background of each child; for she cannot teach him as an individual until she has an understanding of his background experiences.

To sum up some conditions that will help us do a more nearly adequate teaching job for all individuals in the classroom, these four seem essential to me:

(1) No teacher should have so many children that she cannot know each child well. It is asking the impossible of a high-school teacher or junior-high teacher to know 200 to 300 children well.

(2) It would be advisable for each child below the seventh grade to spend two or three years with each teacher. In junior high and high school, large blocks of time could be used instead of a teacher each period.

(3) The materials should be plentiful and widely varied to meet the capabilities of all the children.

(4) Every school should have an adequate testing program and a method of reporting past records of children.

A great range of abilities is inevitable in any classroom and not only should teachers accept this fact but they should be glad for

that range! In our culture there are more than thirty thousand different ways of making a living, and even as you are reading this, more ways are being developed; they will require the individual abilities of every child we teach. Let us then accept the bless-

ing of the individual abilities of pupils. Let us strive not to make children carbon copies of each other but to help them develop their individual potentialities to the greatest proficiency. Let us be glad that children differ!

## A New Approach to Merit Rating

What, then, is the solution to the problem of merit pay? A partial solution may be found in the establishment of national specialty boards comparable to those in the medical profession. The latter provide special recognition in the form of a diplomate to physicians who achieve outstanding levels of skill and knowledge in a particular field, such as surgery or psychiatry. The procedure for acquiring the diplomate in a given field is handled by the national organization of specialists in that field, e.g., the American College of Surgeons sets the requirements and processes the examinations for the diplomate in surgery.

In education, such a plan might work in this way: The national organization of teachers in a given field, for example, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, could set up an examination procedure for the diplomate in their field. These examinations should be comprehensive and rigorous. They should test the applicant's knowledge of his subject and his ability to diagnose and prescribe for various kinds of teaching problems. They should include observation of the applicant in actual teaching situations and also evaluation of any instructional materials prepared by applicants. The entire procedure should be such that only outstanding teachers are "board certified."

The use of board certification would eliminate favoritism, boot-licking, horse-trading, and all the other evils inherent in merit rating procedures whereby teachers are rated by other personnel in their own school system. Since it would not be possible for anyone in the system to give or take away board certification from a teacher, the basis for the undesirable practices just mentioned would not exist. Furthermore, the fact that a teacher could carry his board certification with him to a new position would mean that his professional advancement would not be tied to the subjective judgment of particular administrators in particular school systems. The standards for board certification would have to be high and distinctive enough so that both the non-certified teachers and the public would

regard board certification as a defensible basis for salary differentials. This would happen if there were a nationally recognized body which administered the board examinations under conditions scrupulously designed to achieve this purpose.

Notice also that a system of board certification should eliminate the opposition to merit rating by teachers' organizations. School administrators would not be in a position to coerce teachers' organizations by granting or withholding merit pay to particular teachers. There would be little occasion for squabbling within a teachers' organization over who should receive merit pay.

Opposition to merit pay based upon board certification might develop in the AFT if the organizations which administered the specialty board examinations were departments of the NEA. AFT members might fear that examinations under the control of organizations affiliated, albeit rather loosely, with the NEA might be prejudicial to AFT members. I believe this organizational problem could be solved in several different ways. The examinations might be administered by an independent testing agency, such as the Educational Testing Service, or they might be administered by subject-matter organizations not affiliated with the NEA, such as the American Physical Society or the American Mathematical Association.

Certainly, if any teachers' organization were to oppose such a plan merely out of its organizational fears, it would be rendering a great disservice to American education.

Specialty board certification should not become part of the state certification structure. It should be an extralegal process, so that the specialty boards could make necessary changes from time to time without going through legislative channels. It would also be essential that the specialty boards rigidly adhere to a single standard for teachers all over the country. In this way, any school system or college which employs a board certified teacher would be assured of getting a highly qualified professional employee.—MYRON LIEBERMAN in *Phi Delta Kappan*.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Your Speech* (rev. ed.) by FRANCIS GRIFTH, CATHERINE NELSON, and EDWARD STASHEFF. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1960. 534 pages, \$4.12.

From the letter to the student which prefaces the book, through the handbook of voice and diction which concludes its materials, everything in *Your Speech* is functional. Arranged in four main divisions, the subject matter is so presented that the text may serve for either a full-year or part-year course.

Part I, devoted to "Speech in Everyday Life," is designed to develop a well-poised individual. Introductions, telephone use, recitations in class, conversations, requesting and giving information, getting and holding a job are well covered, plus the art of listening. That the communication cycle concerns listening as well as speaking is a new concept to many teen-agers. The authors give specific suggestions for detecting and correcting listening faults. Especially valuable is the treatment of the language pitfalls one should avoid in listening, such as loaded words, name calling, and slogans. There are suggestions for the detection of faulty reasoning through the understanding of emotionalism, unsupported assertions, generalizing from insufficient evidence, begging the question, personal attacks, scapegoats, band wagons, diversion, and falsehood. That propaganda may be good as well as bad is not always apparent to an adolescent. Suggested projects aim to make this clear.

Part II is more technical, dealing with the tools of speech—the use of the body, the improvement of voice, diction, and vocabulary. The handbook found in the last pages of the text has excellent drills for correlation with this work.

Part III deals with original speech—discussions, interviews, business meetings, and debate. That debating can be fun and rewarding is certain, but too many youngsters have little knowledge of this oldest of activities. A clear presentation of debating techniques and the development of an actual brief make this one of the best parts of the book.

The presentation of the interpretative speech activities makes up Part IV. Storytelling, oral poetry and prose reading, play acting, television and radio work, and choral speaking are included. No teacher needs to have qualms over a unit of choral speech with a copy of *Your Speech* in her possession. The ideas are fresh and practical.

Excellent photographic material enlivens the book, and line drawings by Robert Osborn add a delightful touch of humor which both teacher and pupil will certainly enjoy.

PAULINE W. MERUSI

*A Practical Introduction to Measurement and Evaluation* by H. H. REMMERS, N. L. GAGE, and J. FRANCIS RUMMEL. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960. 370 pages, \$4.75.

The title aptly describes the text. The authors succeed in developing measurement and evaluation techniques, instruments, and terminology from a workable, practical point of view.

The development of educational objectives, both interesting and informative, would seem more appropriate at the beginning rather than midway through the book. The historical development of measurement and evaluation is, however, almost completely lacking.

The presentation of basic statistical concepts is the one weak link in the publication. Because of its brevity and lack of consistency, a beginning student would find it difficult to comprehend basic statistical procedures and ideas from this source alone. The authors, however, do a commendable job of presenting norms, standard scores, and quotients data.

Though somewhat wordy, the development of an evaluation program is acceptable. The authors present good check lists for the selection of standardized, teacher-made objective and essay tests for teaching, guidance, and administrative purposes. Reliability indexes are well described. Development of evidence for validity is, however, rather vague and difficult to understand. No mention is made of *congruent* validity—frequently relied on by test publishers in validating new tests. Test administration, scoring procedures, and particularly test interpretation are well handled, as are discussions of test profiles and precautions inherent in test interpretation.

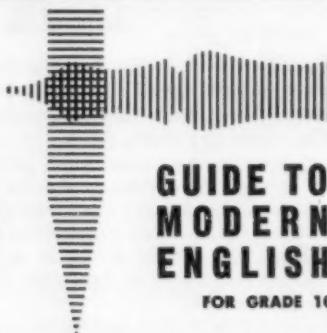
The outstanding and most useful materials in this publication concern the construction of teacher-made tests. Organization and presentation are excellent. Many examples of good and poor test items, along with a logical discussion of rules for constructing objective and essay items, are indicated. There are two additional notable features of the publication: Each chapter is introduced by a brief outline of the material, and the appendix contains a comprehen-

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sive glossary of measurement terms—a valuable and necessary part of basic study in the field of educational measurement.

In summary, this publication appears to be quite adequate as a text in beginning measurement and evaluation. As basic statistical procedures are of importance to thorough understanding of the subject, this area should be supplemented by additional material and careful instruction.

H. A. O'CONNOR

*Pointers on Producing the School Play* by  
HELEN LOUISE MILLER. Boston: Plays,  
Inc., 1960. 112 pages, \$2.95.

In thirteen chapters and a glossary, the novice in play production can learn a good deal about the steps from play selection to putting the play on the boards. Primarily designed for the grades and secondary schools, *Pointers on Producing the School Play* introduces a newcomer to basic principles before he turns to a technical handbook.

The author relies heavily on her fruitful experience as teacher and director to offer suggestions which, from my own work in directing plays for more than ten years, have proved sound and beneficial.

After play selection, guidelines for casting the play, rehearsing the play (including line readings, blocking, characterizing, polishing, and finishing rehearsals), production and performance then follow. Properly, Helen Miller gives attention to "postperformance" matters also. Apart from rehearsal and performance she also offers pointers on costume-making, properties, and make-up. But not on building, lighting, painting, and sound. And not on such business matters as ticket sales, publicity, and rudimentary public relations. I believe that *Pointers* could very well provide some basic suggestions in these fields.

Still this isn't to say that the book is materially reduced in value. For, generally speaking, the approach of this book is to the director and his work with the play and with the actor, rather than to the problems with stage and audience. For the most part, we have what the director faces first and most often—choosing a play and cast and placing the drama on the stage. Most directors do count on specialized skills for building-painting-lighting, although, admittedly, the director may often be stuck with getting an audience.

I liked particularly the pointers for handling children's group scenes (pp. 26-27), when chil-

dren are wont to stand awkwardly or woodenly. Likewise, I liked the emphasis on good speech (pp. 19-23). I cannot, however, see the merit or accuracy of labeling casting through the children's choice as "democratic" contrasted to the director's choice of actors as "the autocratic method," "obviously undemocratic" (pp. 13-18). The author's glossary at the end of the book, although helpful, should probably be doubled.

PAUL PHILLIPS COOKE

*American Education: an Introduction* (rev. ed.) by EMMA REINHARDT. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960. 458 pages, \$5.00.

This revision of Dr. Reinhardt's original text is intended for use in a first course in the professional education sequence. It is divided into four major sections: (1) teaching as a profession; (2) culture and education; (3) the educational ladder; and (4) administration and finance.

The first section is a hodgepodge of miscellany and trivia. It is doubtful that a student in his first professional course will find much value in a detailed description of the procedure to be followed in looking for a teaching position. The question also arises as to the impression left with a student if his introduction to the profession is on the unintellectual level of the first section. Here, particularly, although to some extent throughout the book, the author seems to aim at an audience other than the student in the first professional course. For example, much of the first section is devoted to the problem of teacher selection. While there are check lists that may help a student evaluate his fitness for the profession, much of the discussion would be better suited to a graduate class investigating the problem of screening candidates for teacher-education programs. This section is also afflicted with that plague of education texts—a multitude of long lists.

The second section is definitely meatier and more nearly fits the reviewer's concept of what should be the heart of an introductory course in education. The author, with many good illustrations, has shown the effect of socioeconomic status and other cultural influences upon teaching and learning.

The last two sections are thought provoking. They are concerned mainly with the historical foundations of education and include excellent quotations and illustrations that hold the reader's interest.

In summary, this edition of *American Education: an Introduction* is well worth considering for an introduction to education course. Its

weaknesses are a lack of depth, particularly in the first section, and occasional examples of vague or awkward construction. Its strengths are a warm, attractive style and an easily followed plan.

ROBERT E. KREBS

*Using Mathematics* (Grade 9) (2d ed.) by KENNETH B. HENDERSON and ROBERT E. PINGRY. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1960. 559 pages, \$4.16.

This textbook creates a favorable first impression. The content is new and fairly easy—two things important in a textbook of this type.

Included in this book are all the topics a teacher looks for in a good general mathematics course. The units include: (1) drawings in mathematics; (2) measuring—using common fractions and decimals; (3) comparing numbers by ratio and per cent; (4) graphs; (5) simple formulas; (6) business mathematics—including management of money, use of credit, saving and investing; (7) simple equations; (8) signed numbers; (9) measuring indirectly—scale drawing, vectors, simple trigonometric relations.

The introduction of new material in each unit is done through the discovery method and this helps students to understand and remember the mathematics they study. Review exercises are interspersed in the new material, which should help the students to maintain their skills without boredom.

The problems in this textbook appeal to many interests—they deal with sports, vocations, hobbies, home management, government, business, investment, and other areas. The algebra taught in the solution of simple equations uses the standpoint of modern mathematics.

The sequence of each chapter should help students to learn. The chapters open with an explanation of the practical application and the need for mastery of the material in the chapter. Next in order is a list of the learning aims. Sufficient exercises and problems are given to help students acquire the understandings and skills needed to realize these aims. Short tests, summaries, chapter tests, and cumulative tests give opportunity for more student self-appraisal. Other activities that appealed to this reviewer were the without-paper-and-pencil exercises and the mathematical conundrums and recreations spread throughout the text.

The textbook is interspersed with good illustrations which catch the eye and should help clarify difficult ideas and emphasize the important ones.

WERNER E. BRAND

## CHALLENGES TO AMERICAN YOUTH

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*Education of the Gifted* by MERLE R. SUMPTION and EVELYN M. LUECKING. New York: Ronald Press Co., 1960. 499 pages, \$6.50.

This book has many features which make it one of the outstanding texts on the subject of the gifted to date. The style is smooth and very readable. The reader is led through a well-developed and sequential treatment of the particular area involved. The authors have done a thorough job of bringing their book abreast of new ideas and techniques in the education of the gifted child. They have presented much past research which has been done among the gifted, as well as the more recent studies. Programs from preschool up to and including descriptions of various college programs are discussed objectively. Suggestions for enrichment are made and will doubtless be of specific value to teachers. Each chapter is followed by a short but well-selected annotated bibliography which should be of much use to the reader.

In short, this book does an excellent job and should be read by professional educators and laymen alike for better understanding of this most important field. This reviewer would recommend it without reservation.

EARL K. WARNE

### Who's Who Among Our Reviewers

*Dr. Brand* is professor of mathematics and director of the Campus School, Moorhead State College, Moorhead, Minnesota.

*Dr. Cooke* is professor of English, District of Columbia Teachers College, Washington, D.C.

*Dr. Krebs* is director of instruction, Bellflower (California) Public Schools.

*Mrs. Merusi* is presently a teacher of English in the high school at Rutland, Vermont.

*Dr. O'Connor* is on the faculty of Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

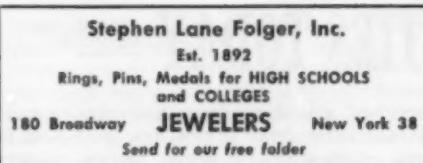
*Dr. Warne* is an associate professor at Eastern Montana College of Education, Billings.

### Paperbounds Received

From the NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY OF WORLD LITERATURE, INC., 501 Madison Ave., New York 22, N.Y.:

*The Ambassadors* by HENRY JAMES, 1960. 382 pages, 50 cents.

*Good Reading* prepared by the COMMITTEE ON COLLEGE READING, J. SHERWOOD WEBER, ed., 1960. 287 pages, 75 cents.



*Jane Eyre* by CHARLOTTE BRONTE, 1960. 461 pages, 50 cents.

*Methuselah's Children* by ROBERT A. HEINLEIN, 1960. 160 pages, 35 cents.

*Orlando* by VIRGINIA WOOLF, 1960. 224 pages, 50 cents.

*The Oscillating Universe* by ERNST J. OPIK, 1960. 144 pages, 50 cents.

*Silas Marner* by GEORGE ELIOT, 1960. 190 pages, 50 cents.

*A Tale of Two Cities* by CHARLES DICKENS, 1960. 383 pages, 50 cents.

From BANTAM BOOKS, INC., 25 W. 45th St., New York 36, N.Y.:

*Three Short Novels* by JOSEPH CONRAD, 1960. 206 pages, 50 cents.

*The World's Love Poetry* edited by MICHAEL RHETA MARTIN, 1960. 370 pages, 75 cents.

From DELL PUBLISHING CO., INC., 750 Third Ave., New York 17, N.Y.:

*Famous American Plays of the 1940's* selected and introduced by HENRY HEWES, 1960. 447 pages, 75 cents.

*Great German Short Stories* edited and introduced by STEPHEN SPENDER, 1960. 284 pages, 50 cents.

*Kidnapped* by ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, 1960. 288 pages, 35 cents.

*The Nigger of the Narcissus* and *The End of the Tether* by JOSEPH CONRAD, 1960. 320 pages, 50 cents.

*Notes from Underground*, *Poor People*, and *The Friend of the Family* by FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY, 1960. 511 pages, 75 cents.

*Persuasion* and *Lady Susan* by JANE AUSTEN, 1960. 384 pages, 50 cents.

*Sister Carrie* by THEODORE DREISER, 1960. 476 pages, 75 cents.

### Books Received

*Anatomy and Physiology, Volume 2* (College Outline Series) by EDWIN B. STEEN and ASHLEY MONTAGU. New York 3: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1959. 314 pages, \$2.50 (paper cover).

*Architectural Drafting* (3d ed.) by WILLIAM J. HORNUNG. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960. 230 pages, \$5.50.

*Be a Better Reader, Book IV*, by NILA BANTON SMITH. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959. 176 pages, \$1.60 (paper cover).

*Business Timed Writings* by ALBERT C. FRIES and LOUIS C. NANASSY. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960. 64 pages, \$1.32 (paper cover).

*Defensive Basketball* by FRANK MCGUIRE. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959. 268 pages, \$4.95.

*Educators Guide to Free Tapes, Scripts, and Transcriptions* (6th ed.) compiled and edited by WALTER A. WITTICH and GERTIE HANSON HALSTED. Randolph, Wis.: Educators Progress Service, 1960. 225 pages, \$5.75 (paper cover).

*Fundamentals of Guided Missiles* by AIR TRAINING COMMAND, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, and TECHNICAL STAFF, AERO PUBLISHERS, INC. Los Angeles 26: Aero Publishers, Inc., 1960. 575 pages, \$12.50.

*McGraw-Hill Handbook of English* (2d ed.) by VIRGINIA SHAFER and HARRY SHAW. New York 36: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1960. 500 pages, \$3.36.

*130 Basic Typing Jobs* by RUTH I. ANDERSON and LEONARD J. PORTER. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960. 61 pages, \$1.44.

*Psychology of Personal Adjustment* (3d ed.) by FRED MCKINNEY. New York 16: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1960. 490 pages, \$6.50.

*Recreation Leadership* (2d ed.) by H. DAN CORBIN. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959. 463 pages, \$6.50.

*School-Community Improvement: a Report of the Greenbrier County Program* by L. CRAIG WILSON, JOHN F. MONTGOMERY, RALPH D. PURDY, and D. D. HARRAH. Yonkers, N.Y.: World Book Co., 1959. 350 pages, \$5.00.

*The Somers Mutiny Affair* edited by HARRISON HAYFORD. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959. 224 pages, \$1.95 (paper cover).

*The Survival Book* by PAUL H. NESBITT, ALONZO W. POND, and WILLIAM H. ALLEN. Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1959. 338 pages, \$7.50.

*This Is the South* edited by ROBERT WEST HOWARD. Skokie, Ill.: Rand McNally and Co., 1959. 304 pages, \$6.00.

*Your Future in Poultry Farming* by JOHN W. GOODMAN and DAVID C. TUDOR. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960. 412 pages, \$5.25.

# THE HUMANITIES TODAY

## TV & NEWER MEDIA

### Why Not Television Imports?

A dozen years ago Professor Lennox Grey of Columbia observed in Lyman Bryson's anthology, *The Communication of Ideas*, that he had yet to find a novel that could portray urban life as artfully as film can. Dr. Grey supported his contention by citing the lifelike simultaneity of impressions with which film is able to confront the viewer, in contrast with the consecutive impressions provided by the printed page.

Actually, a large percentage of Americans now live in a hybrid urban environment on the periphery of a large city. And as this kind of urbanization extends into more and more rural areas, a greater number of people are able to attain a firsthand knowledge of city life. Motion pictures—both documentary and fictional—also give glimpses of vivid and dramatic aspects of living in the city. The point is that both reality and authentic realism are well within reach of the person unfamiliar with this mode of living.

Americans are finding also that views of foreign cultures are becoming increasingly accessible, in both the real and simulated orders. Jets have reduced traveling time so that the person interested in seeing Europe or the Far East needn't spend most of his precious vacation time en route. Planes chartered by student organizations provide passage at virtually half the commercial rates. In addition, groups such as the American Field Service make it possible for exchange students to study abroad and gain firsthand familiarity with other cultures.

Since the government's antitrust suit divorcing motion-picture exhibitors from studio control, Americans in large cities and college towns have been able to see foreign movies that reflect British, French, Italian, Japanese, African, and other mores. I am thinking not of the kind of movie which would be filmed in Italy and star Rock Hudson, nor something like the British-made *Conspiracy of Hearts*, in which Jews, Nazis, and Italians were portrayed by Englishmen and spoke their clichés with British accents. Rather, I refer to pictures that are conceived by foreign artists in foreign settings.

But accessibility alone does not bring foreign cultures into the ken of mass audiences. A relatively small percentage of the population can take advantage of these opportunities to "ex-

perience" a foreign culture. Many movies made abroad never move out of New York City in spite of their artistic worth. Eastern pictures, especially, often seem too slow moving for Occidental audiences. Other films, that are accepted by audiences and critics in New York, may be exhibited elsewhere, but their showings are quite limited.

It would seem particularly important at this stage of the world's development for as many peoples to understand other nations' ways of life as is possible. Ignorance breeds misunderstanding, and today, misunderstanding can be deadly. Also, it would seem axiomatic to suggest that this kind of intercultural communication be accomplished by television in countries which have a large per capita number of television sets.

Ironically, the American TV shows that are being seen in England are the kinds of commercial successes that we could have done well without here. If anything, they give Britons a warped picture of Americans. And what productions do we get from England? Try to locate one in the program listings sometime, even though some of the ablest British film producers are now doing documentaries for TV.

Why can't the government-endorsed cultural exchange programs be expanded to include representative television programs from other countries? Knowing other ways of doing things doesn't always lead to understanding, but it is a beginning.

H.B.M.

## IN PRINT

### *The Entertainer as Hero*

*Bob Hope's Own Story: Have Tux Will Travel*  
as told to PETE MARTIN. New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1956. 305 pages, 35 cents.

A corollary of the assumption that our sense of national purpose sorely needs focusing is that we have raised false gods for worship in our society. Instead of admiring and emulating the professionals and scientists, artists and intellectuals, whose disciplines and skills make our society of abundance possible, our media system holds up for indiscriminate adoration and fantasy a rogue's gallery of irrelevant characters: sports champions, socialite playboys (and their girls of the moment), and those ubiquitous stars of stage, screen, and TV. These are, in the

broadest sense, "The Entertainers," those who, according to Webster, "engage the attention of others agreeably," by amusing and diverting. The word originally referred to the special kind of attention one shows to infrequent guests, when they are given the run of the house or the keys to the city. But the significant thing about our mass entertainment culture is that what once was a sometime thing, an agreeable and wholesome diversion from the enervating work of survival, has now become an almost all-the-time happening. One could assume that such a reshifting of focus, or reinvestment of energies, would have equally profound characterological results.

It becomes important, then, to inquire into the nature of the highly visible entertainer's world view. "What does he stand for?" may be another way of asking what most of us will soon stand for in an entertainer-oriented society.

Bob Hope's "as told to" autobiography is a good source of insight. The fact that it is a synthetic "autobiography" is in itself significant, for throughout the book there is evidence that an entertainer is not so much a person as a business.

So despite the flippant references to authentic autobiographers like Ben Franklin and Giovanni Casanova, and Hope's calculated humility and diffidence about his book's lack of order and coherence, we must remember that we are not reading a deeply felt testament but rather pool-side interviews of a man surrounded by "flacks" (publicity men), a stable of writers, and bookkeepers. Another pervasive theme is Hope's obsession with pay raises, from a few boyish dollars winning foot races at Cleveland picnics to conning Sam Goldwyn into paying him \$100,000 for a movie when his Paramount contract stipulated only \$25,000 per picture. At one point, he italicizes his own philosophizing: "Wouldn't it be amazing to make a thousand dollars a week! If I ever made a thousand a week I don't think I'd talk to anybody. How could you make a thousand dollars a week! If I'd told them back home that I was making four hundred a week they'd think I'd been robbing a bank and was hiding out."

This is acting out in a magnified way the American ritual of success. Fame brings money and attention, even the absurd extreme of celebrity culture that made a New York man offer Hope \$10,000 just to show up at his party. (The comedian countered by offering to phone him during the party for \$5,000.) But fame in an egalitarian society is a tricky business. Fame was unquestionably Hope's biggest thrill next to a

warm audience reception. He used to walk to his Broadway theater to relish this sensation: "It was a kick, whipping down to the theater and saying 'Hi' to the traffic cops and to people on the Avenue and to the people in the show when you got there. That was really living." He admired Jimmy Durante's shrewdness for hiring a "memory" man to remember people's names for him so he could flatter them by having remembered. "You like to remember names because your old friends get a complex about you and begin to ask themselves, 'I wonder if he'll remember me?' They think 'you've gone Hollywood,' . . . So you like to give them no reason for suspecting such a thing." When Fred MacMurray didn't forget to remember Hope on the latter's first visit to Hollywood, Hope came to this conclusion: "If I needed anything to tell me how important it is to stay human, that was it."

There is also a childlike innocence about Hope's sheer joy at hobnobbing with General Patton, ad-libbing with King George, golfing with Eisenhower, calling Air Force Secretary Symington "Stu."

Thus an entertainer's whole personality focuses on the business of being well liked. Even one's name is tailored; Hope changed it from Lester to Bob, because he thought "Bob had more 'Hi ya, fellas' in it." And the audience is always right. "He should remember that if they don't react the way he thinks they ought to react, it's his fault. Either he's not selling his material, or it was bad material in the first place." Or "When he tells his first gag and the place falls apart, his life is complete." Why did he entertain so many troops overseas? Because they were the most receptive audiences imaginable. ". . . You can work an audience and pull down twenty thousand bucks, but if the audience doesn't like you, you won't be happy with all that money. But if you work an audience for nothing and you're a hit and you feel that electricity crackle back and forth between you, you're happy. Being there is worthwhile."

In a democratic society where the common man is king, to be successful you have to flatter his superficiality and his prejudices. You identify with his averageness (George Jessel introduced him at a Friars Club celebrity night as an "average American who makes three million dollars a year").

So Hope's no. 1 joke is one based on today's news headlines; next in importance are local jokes; an analysis of his humor before servicemen adds the categories of anti-officer, sex, and broad exaggeration. He avoids political con-

troversy in deference to his sponsor; is against a disease (cerebral palsy) to build good public will; almost identifies American opportunity with his getting paid to kiss Dorothy Lamour in the movies; wants his son to be able to grow up to be President with this as an alternative; and promotes a bland kind of religion best suggested by Father Keller's inviting him to costar with Ben Hogan and Bing Crosby in a film called "Faith, Hope and Hogan." ("The Christophers are trying to spread religion in general. They don't make any special effort to try to spread the Catholic Religion, they just try to spread good to the whole world. . . . I imagine they labeled Bing Faith because of his role in 'Going My Way.'")

Hope regards Durante highly because "he's bighearted and he lives to be nice to people. I don't think he has an enemy." In describing his own idyllic home life, he philosophizes: "You only live once and you have maybe twenty-five more years to enjoy yourself, so why not live it up until the sheriff comes and wheels the whole thing off to be sold? So that's what we're doing—living it up. And it's a joy and a pleasure. When you've worked long enough and hard enough, I think you have the right to baby yourself a little."

It may appear unusually humorless to subject a stand-up comedian to such grim cross-examination, especially since the writer himself is a great admirer of Hope's wit and style. But that is the paradox of the entertainer's usurpation in contemporary American life. As an amusing court jester, he was fine; as royalty, he is innocent and babies us too much. As entertainers become the focus of American culture, their contagious lack of seriousness becomes a serious matter. In discussing the serious professional problem of overexposure, Hope observed that "the public is rich right now as far as free entertainment goes. . . . My hunch is that the public is being spoiled through being overentertained." It is my judgment that because the entertainer monopolizes the collective consciousness with a froth of *ad hoc* raillery, neutralizes political commitment, flatters an already complacent audience's prejudices, and propagandizes for the entertainer's *Weltanschauung* of being nice to people, against diseases, and for Father Keller, the public is indeed "being spoiled by overentertainment." But the entertainment isn't "free" at all, because it is exchanged for the precious commodity, leisure, that should be reinvested in the personal and social skills needed in a mass society.

PATRICK D. HAZARD  
University of Pennsylvania

### Bargain Books

*Film: Book 1* edited by ROBERT HUGHES. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1959. 158 pages (and 24 pages of cuts), \$1.45.

More current than the film anthologies which never escape from a wave of nostalgia for the good old days of silent movies, *Film: Book 1* samples the thinking of esteemed film makers on audiences, censorship, and the present state of the art. Their outspoken remarks on the most discouraging developments in recent years reveal the kind of candor that successful artists can afford. Many of them thoroughly dislike the tools that technological researchers are providing for them.

The two short pieces on Robert Flaherty (one by his widow, Frances) introduce a poet of film to those who might have missed him thus far.

An article by George Stoney on the difficulties he faced in Georgia producing an artful training film for Negro midwives (*All My Babies*) is still pertinent although he began work on the picture in 1951.

English teachers will find a section of a scenario by James Agee illustrates the problems one encounters in reading film scripts because of the multiple stage and camera directions which block the flow of narrative.

Besides examining the craft of film makers, the book takes a close look at the audience. Siegfried Kracauer discusses the audience from a psychological point of view, and Arthur Knight writes on some economic factors that concern audiences for better films.

Unfortunately, the eight pages of stills at the end add nothing. The cartoons by the Osborns which precede them, however, are charming.

H.B.M.

### POEMS FOR STUDY

#### TREES

By JOYCE KILMER

I think that I shall never see  
A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is pressed  
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks to God all day,  
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear  
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;  
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree.

This poem has, as we know, been a great popular success. It has been well received by many who do not care for poetry in general. It has evoked a little response of some sort in persons typically impervious to poetry. Some of this success is attributable to the fact that the poem has been set to music, and has been sung as an encore in innumerable concert halls by innumerable vocalists of all ranges of ability and disability.

In *Understanding Poetry*, edited by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 3d ed., 1960, pp. 287-89), *Trees* is printed with a two-page commentary which starts by saying flatly that, though the poem has been greatly admired, "it is a bad poem." The authors then support this blunt statement with roughly the following argument:

These twelve lines (say Brooks and Warren) make a fundamental comparison, or one constantly implied, between a tree and a human being. They then say that "the reader has a right to expect a consistent use to be made of the aspects of the human being which appear in the poem." This is not done. In stanza two, the tree is a sucking babe, in the third stanza it is old enough to engage in religious devotions. In stanza one the mouth of the human being is the root of the tree. In stanza three the branches become leafy arms, and so we are beginning to get a horrid picture of a decidedly malformed human being. And then we have the bosom, etc., upon which snow has lain, and our worshiper by now is a devout young woman having some kind of an affair ("intimately lives") with rain.

Now, first of all, Messrs. Brooks and Warren have an absolute right to consider this a bad poem, but if they insist on it in print, they have a corollary obligation to make their case. For some reason that beats me they have decided quite arbitrarily that having implied the comparison of tree with human being, Kilmer was obliged to preserve a representational and consistent physiology in working it out. Why do our editors insist on this? If they started applying this stringency to other poets, they would be in an awful jam right off. Just try being rigorous in this way with some of the better known passages in Shakespeare, or with *Lycidas* with its "blind mouths" and its elaborate and inconsistent artificialities, and you are in very hot water.

Everyone has his own preference in mixed or inconsistent images, but you just have to let the poets mix them. Brooks and Warren have set up rules for Kilmer's poem which they do not apply elsewhere, to my knowledge. I firmly believe these rules are improper. Many a respectable lyric would become a monstrosity if they were invoked.

Though in general I would agree that the best poetry survives any approach, it may well be that sometimes too analytical an approach can be disastrous. Perhaps *Trees* and a good many other poems that are short and, in a sense, slight, should be read impressionistically. Some "lovely" (Messrs. B. & W. do not care for that word either) things are insubstantial, even flimsy, not tough enough for the really "close" readers, but they still can be lovely.

Actually it is not difficult to see why this poem has been well thought of, and some of the reasons are good ones. First of all it has the merit of simplicity, and (Heaven help me for saying this) readability. It is free of ambiguity and paradox, as some fine lyrics should be and always have been. It communicates. I may as well go all the way, since I have announced my allegiance to the Philistine camp already, and say that it has the ring of sincerity. Brooks and Warren are very sticky about "sincerity." They seem to say it is virtually impossible to recognize this element. I think there is no doubt that Joyce Kilmer was deeply moved by *trees* (I mean the objects), as in fact are all persons genuinely responsive to nature, and he got his feeling into the poem for the average reader, and the better-than-average reader. The implied comparison with a human that Kilmer has made, works if you do not press it too far. Our editors, B. & W., also demur to the comparison between a tree and a poem, as they slant one of their questions to suggest that the two are completely incommensurate. I don't see it. Kilmer is proposing that a poem is a man-made artifact; a tree, a divinely made artifact. What's wrong with that? And the further proposal that trees have considerably more impact than poems on whatever aesthetic sense we have, is defensible.

There is a small boy in a *New Yorker* cartoon drinking soup, and the caption reads: "This is a good soup, but not a great soup." Kilmer's effort belongs in the respectable canon of nature lyrics, and I think the "people" have been right in liking it. It is merely snobbish to tear Kilmer's poem to pieces because of a primary comparison inconsistently developed.

WILLIAM ROSS CLARK  
University of Connecticut

# == AUDIO-VISUAL NEWS ==

## English

From ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA FILMS, 1150 Wilmette Ave., Wilmette, Ill.:

MR. CHAIRMAN: film, 13 mins., black and white, \$90. An animated discussion and illustration of the basic principles of parliamentary procedures, introducing Mr. Roberts to explain his own "rules of order." Explains what is meant by a primary motion and all the other motions that may be made to effect it. Excellent for any club to see. (Jr.-Sr. High)

From CORONET INSTRUCTIONAL FILMS, Coronet Bldg., Chicago 1, Ill.:

MAKING SENSE WITH OUTLINES: film, 10 mins., black and white, \$60. A planned visit to a fruit farm is used as a basis for organizing subject matter into an outline form. (Jr. High)

BUILDING BETTER PARAGRAPHS: film, 10 mins., black and white, \$60. Pupils learn how to write a paragraph as they discuss an item for inclusion in the school newspaper. (Jr. High)

WRITING BETTER SOCIAL LETTERS: film, 10 mins., black and white, \$60. A young girl has trouble writing a social letter to her relatives until she discovers that the easy way to write a letter is to write just as if she were talking. (Jr. High)

WRITING BETTER BUSINESS LETTERS: film, 10 mins., black and white, \$60. The characteristics of a good business letter—clarity, brevity, and courtesy—are emphasized as a student makes out an order for an item. (Jr. High)

## Music

From CORONET INSTRUCTIONAL FILMS, Coronet Bldg., Chicago 1, Ill.:

READING MUSIC: LEARNING ABOUT NOTES: film, 10 mins., black and white, \$60.

READING MUSIC: FINDING THE RHYTHM: film, 10 mins., black and white, \$60.

READING MUSIC: FINDING THE MELODY: film, 10 mins., black and white, \$60.

This series of three films considers notes, rhythm, and melody. The first film presents the song, "The Humming Frog," which shows how notes may move up and down in steps, may move in skips, or may remain on the same note. The third film presents "The Rocket's Ship

Song," a song which provides an opportunity for the children to develop skill in translating melodic lines.

In the second film, familiar songs are used to bring out the rhythm. Animated drawings are used throughout the films. Flashing notes and marks glow to point them out. These films are ones that will draw the audience into immediate participation. (Jr. High)

From JAM HANDY, 2821 E. Grand Blvd., Detroit 11, Mich.:

OPERA AND BALLET STORIES: sound filmstrip, set of 6, color, \$28.50. The following stories are shown on the filmstrip and explained on one side of the record: Lohengrin, The Magic Flute, Aida, The Barber of Seville, Die Meistersinger, Coppelia. The reverse side of the record contains some arias from each. (Jr.-Sr. High)

INSTRUMENTS OF THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: sound filmstrip, set of 6, color, \$51. Records and commentary are excellent. Each strip considers a different group of instruments as follows: stringed, woodwinds, brass, percussion, melodious percussion, the orchestra. The reverse side of each record has the orchestra playing a selection. (Jr.-Sr. High)

## Industrial Arts

From BAILEY FILMS, INC., 6509 De Longpre Ave., Hollywood 28, Calif.:

LEARNING TO SET TYPE: film, 10 mins., black and white, \$60. This film demonstrates the basic principles of typesetting and distribution for beginning students. In close-ups and slow motion the process of setting and distributing the type is explained. Points stressed in the film are the correct ways of manipulating the type, the importance of the left thumb, the "spotting" of letters before they are selected, the care needed during distribution, and the importance of following copy and correcting errors. (Jr.-Sr. High)

PUTTING A JOB ON A PLATEN PRESS: film, 10 mins., black and white, \$60. This film helps the instructor by close-ups of the proper techniques.

An instructor finds it difficult to show these close-ups to an entire class. Proper inking is shown. (Jr.-Sr. High)

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